Mercy for The Worlds Series | 9

Muslim World League
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Dr. Sarah Adam
Professor of Sociology and Philosophy of Ethics

Lecturing on Aspects of Mercy Twards Human Beings in The Person of Muhammad (PBUH)

Prepared for Readers By
Prof. Dr. Zaid Omar Abdullah Al-Eis
Professor at King Saud University
Department of Islamic Culture

Translated by :
Dr. Zouheir Samhouri

www.mercyprophet.com
info@mercyprophet.com

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Most Merciful Most Compassionate

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H.E. Dr. Khaled bin Mansoor Al-Durais

Arbitration Committee Rapporteur`

May the peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you

I acknowledge receipt of your letter pertaining to the recommendation of the Committee in respect of introducing certain amendments to my research which was submitted to you. While thanking you for your good will, I wish to express my appreciation of the distinguished work performed by the Arbitration Committees, which was reflected by the scrupulous remarks it contained.

I am pleased to inform you that I have incorporated all the remarks in your report, though some of them, it seemed to me, were a matter of opinion. However, I found that our mutual interest requires that they should be carried out, because they will contribute, in their totality, to the upgrading of the research.

May Allah reward you and the Committee Members. I attach a revised manuscript and an electronic version.

Bless you and peace be upon you.

Your brother

Prof. Dr. Zid bin Omar Al-Ais
King Saud University
12/5/1428 H.

of In the Name Allah Most Merciful Most Compassionate

Foreword to the Organizing Committee

Praise be to Allah and may His peace be upon His elected servants

I have deemed it proper to depart from the traditional and well known style in the writings pertaining to such subjects. Such style is usually based on the narration of information that is included in chapters and studies that are repetitive and habitual.

I have come to the conclusion that such methods are no longer in vogue or acceptable to certain categories of contemporary readers, particularly western readers, who know almost nothing of such traditional methods. Such readers are used to stimulating methods that are unlike the habitual ones. Indeed, authors now resort to consulting offices that specialize in the promotion of creative writings.

Prompted by my wish to follow this approach, I have chosen for this research the format of lectures, that leave room for discussions and interventions, and found it convenient for such lectures to be delivered by a woman, for whom I have invented a neutral name that has no religious or racial connotation, who teaches at a university to which I gave no name or place in order to void any prejudices that would deprive the subject of its objectivity and suspense, which, in turn, makes the reader lose interest. Thus, I sought to make the reader feel that my role is simply that of recording and follow up.

I believe this view will meet with acceptance and appreciation.
Allah Almighty guides to the straight pass.

Your author brother
Prof. Dr. Zaid bin Omar Al-Ais

Prologue

In the Name of Allah, Most Merciful Most Compassionate. To Him is due all praise. He has showered His bounties on humanity by sending to them noble messengers, peace be upon them.

It is my conviction and that of many others, that contemporary humanity needs the past and its useful gifts and legacy no less than it needs contemporary civilization, in terms of innovations and accomplishments, if not more, in certain respects.

The ancient past has a beauty that attracts the souls of human beings, a beauty that is no less than that of the contemporary present, although the preoccupation of humanity with the present has almost made it forget its past whose rich pages are in great abundance.

I do not think that anyone would turn away or renounce this discourse, seeing, as I do, that humanity is exhausted, despite the means of comfort and security available to it. It has gone astray, despite the innumerable and countless technological devices afforded to it, has lost its orientation and has involved itself in countless disputes, the differences between its individuals by far outnumbering those that they have in common.

Contemporary humanity is urgently invited to search in all directions so that it may, hopefully, find a way that would help it and lead it to the world of love, mutual mercy and tolerance.

I believe that it turns to the past, when its great figures who have passed away existed and belong to all humanity. The successive generations are entitled to become acquainted with the story of their lives and to adopt from the sciences all that can be applied, in the hope that they would unite them for the purpose of clamping down on the factors of division, and spread mutual mercy and unification. Otherwise, why should humanity preserve the biography and history of such personalities, if it cannot benefit from them?

People, all people, love factual news; they interact with touching situations and respond to humane events that activate the impulses of good and dispel those of evil.

Many are those who deliver lectures or participate in seminars that deal with such topics, with a view to expounding them to people and to embellishing them in their eyes so that they may find their way to their hearts. They do this because they are driven by their feeling of duty to them and by their desire to discharge their trust.

How many are those among them whose writings are cherished by the readers thereof, who are fascinated by the reverberations of the contents of their writings? I say this, in full appreciation of all of them, but I have no definite answer to my question.

However, I do believe that Dr. Sarah Adam, professor of sociology and the ethics of philosophy, qualifies to be included among them. I have listened to a series of nine consecutive lectures delivered by her, which were outstanding and beneficial. Hence, what she said is worth listening to and deserves to be recorded for others to read.

Dr. Sarah has chosen to talk on the great figures of humanity, whose outstanding lives are a source of great benefit to the present generation, as they represent living examples to those who have translated theoretical virtues into living practice, that is easy to understand and apply.

But despite the tremendous efforts and research, history provided her with scanty information concerning the past great figures. This constituted a real obstacle she had to face. For how can people emulate and follow on the footsteps of the unknown? There was an exception, though, of a great generosity of history which provided her with ample information concerning the merciful Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

She has discovered that addressing the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is fraught with delicate matters that are beyond the scope of this work. Thus, when she examined an exhaustive description that is closely associated with the sayings and actions of the Prophet (pbuh) under all sorts of circumstances, she found that this description was that of mercy, in all its aspects and manifestations. So, when she decided to lecture on him, she confined her attention to that attribute, after making an indispensable introduction.

In her nine lectures, she presented stories and events in the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), which may not be new for many categories of people, who have seen in them sporadic, independent stories and events. What is new and useful, however, is that she managed to uncover their other aspect, when she collected them in a remarkable pattern and solemn procession, through which she put forward a theory of prophethood and ethics, characterized by an integral structure and balanced orientation, in which the attribute of mercy was the cornerstone.

I sympathized with her and was impressed by her great energy and enthusiasm in her quest for true and correct information, which she adduced in support of her statements, to the exclusion of any other information. Such an approach prompts me to say: “The lectures of Dr. Sarah Adam derive from genuine sources that were transmitted from one generation to another, who received them and accepted them. Thus, she drew on such sources and leaned on them in her presentation and analysis, although I discovered certain minor matters in her reporting of events, by adding a word or substituting one word for another in certain contexts, solely for the purpose of clarification. There is nothing wrong in that, in my view.

I wished she had not burdened the text with footnotes and multiple references and confined herself to just one or two, even if the text or story occurred in several sources. I also noticed that she did not stick to the titles of her lectures, because she considered them one integral series. This prompted her to give them casual titles.

I have often heard her say that she tries hard to distance herself in her lectures from scientific and scholarly debates and arguments. She seeks to make her lectures more like discussions in a family atmosphere: just realistic lectures, deriving their realism from the real happenings she narrates and simple events she reports deriving their simplicity from the simplicity of the maker of these events, namely, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Herein lies true greatness, as she sees it.

They are nine lectures in which Dr. Adam went through gardens of delight, portraying the Prophet’s life. In them, she combined, in scrupulous harmony, a bouquet in which there is, in every flower, a manifestation of the mercy of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), a bouquet which she presented as a gift to

humanity, accompanied by a small card wherein is written the Prophet's saying: "I am but a mercy granted to all humanity."

The foregoing is a mere point of view of mine; the reader may have a different view after attending these lectures as a guest. I do not wish to reveal the beautiful contents of these lectures, nor to provide a summary thereof, lest I should deprive the reader of the element of surprise and beauty of the unravelling of this great story.

I find that I am prompted to be brief, as the reader, just like myself, is bored by waiting in expectation. There remains, however, one sentence to say to the dear reader: "Dr. Sarah is talking to you: on the manifestations of mercy towards human beings emanating from the person of Muhammad, may Allah's mercy and blessings be upon him."

Prof. Dr. Zaid Omar Al-Ais

First Lecture

A Crisis in Values and Avarice in History

Those who are acquainted with Dr. Sarah Adam, Professor of Sociology – who lectures in several universities and scientific gatherings on the philosophy of ethics – particularly those who do not miss any of her lectures, which are of an academic or cultural nature – are almost unanimously agreed that she is fond of factual information and actively searches for it. Thus, she refuses to divide it into important or unimportant or into big and small.

She repeatedly says that great achievement is nothing but a set of small achievements. Those who know her also know that she is careful to read between the lines.

Those who listen to what goes on between her students and those who follow her lectures will find that in spite of their great admiration for her ideas and approaches and their eagerness to hear her new ideas, will appreciate their feeling, at times , of exhaustion and boredom when she begins to elaborate on details and goes on to analysis. At the same time, they do not deny that she has earned the admiration of many for this methodology of hers.

It would seem that some would, bashfully, ask whether it is true that the devil resides in the details, but for their fear of a look of reprimand or blame that could perhaps be followed by Dr. Adam bringing them to task because she rejects such statement, particularly in scientific forums, and in lecture halls.

This statement, she believes, is the commodity of politicians, some of whom she sometimes criticises for what is to her an obvious reason, namely, the crime they commit against the truth, when they make sweeping generalizations and for the expressions they keep repeating, hiding through them things that are not pleasant. To them, she adds those who falsify truth and do not respect people's minds in many cases, including some journalists.

Many have conceded that she has no preconceived ideas or fixed prejudices against any category of people. What is known of her is her partiality for accurate information, *per se*, and her great respect for those who listen to her lectures or read her writings, because she feels that they are doing her a favour.

At some private sessions, Dr. Sarah Adams has admitted that her approach, which she has been keen on, for years, has caused her some problems, including the criticism of some of her colleagues, who claim that, at times, she lures her students, by expanding the circle of criticism, and non-acceptance of certain information, except after discussion and the raising of many questions.
She believes that any lecturers and writers, whatsoever, will never win the respect of the public and receive their confidence in them unless they themselves respect their abilities and appreciate their minds and consider their readers their partners in the quest for the truth.

She has implanted in the minds of her students that true information is a sign that distinguishes those who possess it and those who do not possess it. She always used to quote from the Holy Quran; "*Can they who know and those who do not know be deemed equal*" (Al-Zumar: 9) and woul then remain silent for a while. The she would say: "\Of course not."

She also believes that decent and good deeds are numerous, and the best of them is that which seeks the truth. In this respect, she quotes from the Bible a sentence that she often repeats: "The foundation of piety is the search for and attainment of the truth."

On certain academic functions, she would differ with some of her colleagues. She is of the view that the reader or listener is a partner in the quest for the truth, while some believe that many of those do not possess qualifications that confer this right on them. She used to say, after such statements, that, whatever the case may be, this did not mean any disrespect for the reader or the listener, through ignoring the true facts and non-recognition of the truth, even if bitter.

On certain occasions, Dr. Sarah was compelled to say that when Herbert Schiller wrote his book on those who trifle with minds, he may have angered some writers and scholars when he said, "There is an elite who seek to lead astray the minds of the masses, with a view to subjugating them for personal aims[1]. She adds, "or public aims for the account of certain parties, which makes things even worse".

Dr. Adam does not hide from her students, and those who are close to her, her strong upsetting when she sometimes finds a similarity between journalistic work and some part of academic work, in respect of methodology or aims. Thus, she was not much surprised to read a statement by the famous media person Henry Lewis, the founder of the Time Newspaper and other newspapers and magazines of wide circulation, to the effect that "Journalistic objectivity is

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[1] Herbert D. Schiller, *Those Who Ttrifle with the Minds,* p.7; translated by Abdul Salam Radwan, *'aalam al-ma'rifat*, Kuwait 1999.

something absolutely bogus. Hence when we say that let objectivity go to hell, we mean this precisely"[2] .

She was not surprised by this statement because this is corroborated, in many instances, but she was surprised and even greatly saddened when she saw that this also applied in some academic works.

One of her fans, who keeps abreast with her academic activity, remembers her saying in one of her interventions on the occasion of an academic seminar, "I am greatly surprised when I consider that some people erupt in anger when some of their personal belongings are stolen from them, but no such eruption of anger is seen when some steal their mind, their freedom of thought and confiscate their opinion, so that they become prisoners of a certain person or a certain party. What is a great pity is when a category of people are resigned to this condition and even exult in it."

Dr. Adam has met some subtle difficulties on account of her views and approach. But, on the other hand, she became famous throughout almost all the academic world, winning the respect of all who knew her, closely, even some of those who were annoyed and embarrassed by her.

Dr. Adam lectures on sociology and is involved in ethics, as I have said. In her latest lecture, titled "Motives of Individual Ethics", given at a seminar on human rights, in the context of international conflicts, she talked on what she termed the crisis of values, which humanity is going through today. She confessed that she had borrowed this term from an essay by the thinker, Dr. Raja Garoudi, who said that humanity was

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[2] *Ibid*, p.269

suffering from a crisis of values that almost caused it to lose its ethics.[3]

In her lecture, she wanted authentic figures provided by reliable sources, to reflect this crisis. Thus she said:

“1. A study conducted by the United Nations Society on Childhood Rights has confirmed that twenty million children were sold during the last decade and now lead a severe life of childhood.

2. The British international Lancet Journal has reported that four million children die annually, in the first month after birth, of poverty and disease.

3. Human Development Report says that more than eight hundred and fifty million people, the third of whom are pre-school age children, are trapped in the frightful circle of malnutrition and the complications resulting therefrom.

4. The World Non-Governmental *Medecins Sans Frontieres* has reported that two million children have died in the armed conflicts that erupted in the nineties, and added that five to six million children were wounded or were permanently disabled.

5. The 2005 Human Development Report has indicated that eight hundred million children throughout the world today lack the basic reading and writing skills,

6.The Human Development Report has indicated that forty million people suffer from HIV/AIDS (human acquired immunity deficiency syndrome) in 2005 and more than twenty five million have died since the AIDS virus was identified for

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3 Essay by Dr. Raja Garoudi, published by the *Arab Education Joural*, V 3, p. 47.

the first time in 1981. The United Nations has warned of the possibility of the death of more than eighty million Africans of this illness by 2025.

7. The International Institute for Peace Research has revealed in its annual report that world military expenditures exceeded one thousand thirty billion dollars in 2004."

While quoting these figures, Dr, Adam was reciprocating the listeners' amazement looks accompanied by signs that clearly indicate the amount of sadness and sorrow, and the helplessness that was felt by all who were in the lecture hall. When the lecture came to an end, silence spread over the hall, except for certain expressions prompted by courteous motives. It was as though the audience were saying: "Silence is more effective when one is short of words."

A voice broke the silence from the far end of the hall, addressing Dr. Sarah as she was leaving the place, saying: "What to do? What is the ideal method that contributes to the awakening of humanity from its slumber and rescuing it from this destructive deterioration? What is the role of the honest writers, who possess no more than their writing pens? Indeed, what is *your* role, after having delivered this lecture, in respect of the amazing and indeed disgraceful figures who are a shame which brands this humanity that has gone astray?"

Once the speaker has finished, the audience erupted in intercrossing expressions. Dr. Adam concluded that all the audience bear the same feelings expressed by the speaker. This pleased her and prompted her to tarry a while before leaving and to address the audience saying: "I appreciate your feelings and thank you for your enthusiasm."

She went on to say, “Your attitude has reminded me of the conviction which I found among several sociologists, namely, that humanity is inclined to favor virtues and hate vices and is repelled by them, as long as it is far removed from external influences that negatively affect people’s minds in many places.”

Before leaving, she promised to consider the views she heard and the questions asked and said she hoped that the next cultural season, which was not far behind, would contain subjects that are relevant to the views expressed and that she might have answers to what was said and what is being said in that respect.

A month, or more, has elapsed, and the University magazine appeared carrying a piece of news to the effect that Dr Adam was lecturing on the life of the great figures of humanity and the effect of their lives in propagating ethical culture throughout humanity, particularly among the decision makers and the thinkers who influence their societies.

Dr. Sarah says that she was lucky, because the University cultural season was delayed for a few weeks, and that she was again lucky when she was allotted, for this season, more lectures than usually assigned to her, as some professors have not been able to participate for various reasons.

She began her first lecture by talking of the reasons that prompted her to study the lives of great figures and mentioned the aims she was seeking to achieve through these studies. Says Dr. Adam:

“I have previously pointed out, in a lecture which I delivered a few weeks ago, which some of you may have attended or read about, that humanity is going through its worst days and most

degrading conditions. This was made explicit by some figures previously quoted, which will be distributed in a separate paper, and therefore, there is no need to reiterate them, and I hope they will be added to the lectures of this season. This is because such figures, many of which I have dropped, were among the major reasons for my choice of this topic,. The actual state of affairs confirms that we are not exaggerating or following illusions.

The media bring us almost nothing but the increasing number of persons who are killed and displaced, the rising rate of unemployment, the expanding circle of dispute, the spreading of fatal diseases, the increasing number of the poor, the various forms of aggression against all categories of human beings, all aspects of the environment. All this constitute a threat to the very existence of all humanity.

Under such conditions, which are extremely dangerous, there is a dire need and necessity to bring to the attention of the world the biographies of some great figures of humanity, to acquaint them with their biographies and spread their teachings far and wide. This, I believe, will contribute to the promotion of morality and alienate people from immoral conduct.

This option is a step in the right direction, towards the besieging of evil and evil people, to pursue those who cause problems, who trifle with the destiny, security and potentialities of humanity, although it is but a step in a long trip of a thousand miles. However, its importance lies in that it is in the right direction.

We agree with those who say that the great are few, no matter how many they may be in numbers. This will facilitate the study of their life stories because they are scarce and constitute

elite. Those who qualify under this category should receive our attention, particularly at a time when humanity needs their ethical heritage and their experience that was successful in many fields.

If we add to this what was said earlier, that people are innately good and incline towards virtues, and love the exponents of these virtues, this will convince researchers that these studies will bring a great benefit for humanity.

The benevolent effect of this exhausted humanity is reflected in a clear picture, when it is presented with living examples of persons who practiced a moral life , making it and the virtues associated with it an actual and vivid reality, a possible way of conduct, in our real life. There is o doubt that humanity needs such orientation after the distortion that has affected many aspects of its life.

We concede that the life story of great figures in the history of humanity has been somewhat abused, intentionally or otherwise, for reasons that sometimes include ignorance or deliberate ignoring for reasons which we do not wish to go through at this juncture. I believe that Herbert A. Schiller has touched on some of these reasons in his book *Those who Trifle with (People's) Minds*, though not directly.

Mr. Aqqad has done well when he diagnosed the illness and prescribed the medicine, saying, "Humanity needs those great figures as much as it has made abused them."[4]

As in her usual lectures, Dr, Adam has talked on some aspects of the approach she would follow in her studies, although this

[4] Abbas Al-Aqqad, *The Genius of Muhammad,* Second impression, p.52, 1969, Dar Al-Fikr, Beirut.

should have been at the beginning of the lecture. As she said, "but no matter, for we are still at the beginning of the road."

Dr Adam said that she had collected the books that deal with the life stories of those great figures, particularly history books, because she agrees with the statement of Thomas Carlyle, the author of the book on heroes: "History is a record of the deeds of great figures." Thus, she strove to extract the facts from this history and nothing but the facts, to put them before her readers, and then it is up to them to follow the course, and apply the advice, if they will, of the world intellectual Noam Chomsky, who said after having collected a great many frightening facts: "I have extracted these facts from history, and one must enunciate them loudly and proclaim them to the public."[4]

While Chomsky has found in he pages of contemporary history frightening and terrible facts, for our part, we are delving into the pages of the remote past history in search for bright and shining pages and I believe we shall find many of what we are looking for.

Through His Mercy to His creatures, God establishes for them landmarks of good and guiding beacons in the form of pure human symbols, either through their persons during their life time, or through the bright and noble life they led and the beautiful legacy they left us in their long voyage, in order to remind people if they forget, and to assist them if they remember.

In her lecture she indicated that she had read a great deal on the life story of great figures and recorded the majority of them in chronological order, because to the precursors goes great credit, as the successors benefit from the precursors, particularly in the world of ethics. Thus humanity almost never

differs over their merits, which are transmitted from one generation to another and from one individual to another.

After a short break, Dr. Adam proceeded, saying:

“I have been searching for weeks in libraries and other media channels, for the life story of Buddha, who is a well known ancient saint, who is venerated by hundreds of millions of people in Asia in particular, who is also well known for his ascetic life and serene spirit.

I am sorry to say that in light of the method I follow in my lectures, I was unable to gather enough information that would enable me to present a clear picture of Buddha and his teachings, despite my extensive readings.

Lest I should be accused of laziness or bias, I would like to mention to you that outstanding scholars share my opinion in respect of this sorrowful result, or rather it is I who share their opinion, as they were involved in investigating this subject before me.

Thus, Professor Salman Al-Nadawi, the great scholar of India, in the past century, admits, after an extensive research on the life of Buddha, that he was unable to gather information regarding him. Thus he asks, “Does history care enough for the existence of Buddha? Can a writer offer a true picture of his history? Can an author give a complete description of his circumstances and the conditions of his life, leaving no detail concerning the date of his birth, his country, the origins of his religion, which he himself has preached, the principles and objectives of of his teachings.?”

“What we know is that all this is screened from people and is hidden behind dense and cumulative darkness[5].

If the result I have reached, like others before me, regarding the life of Buddha does not suffer from any audacity in the opinion of some people, the more audacious and greater surprise came from Professor R. F. Bodley, the well known British historian, who has generalized this judgment to include with Buddha other great figures. Says Bodley in this respect, “We do not find what the contemporaries of Moses, Confucius and Buddha have written of them, and we know but some fragments of the life of Christ after his mission.”[6]

I do not deny that Bodley’s opinion regarding the life of Christ, though objectionable to many writers, is nevertheless somewhat true in fact. In any case, it is a view that is less strange compared to the opinion expressed by theologians in America, which view reflects a repugnant abuse, for they have rejected the existence of Christ, pbuh, and considered that all that was reported of him are mere legends and what was reported of him is a remainder of the paganism of Rome and Greece.

The matter was not confined to this repugnant attitude, for arguments continued for months on the existence of Christ pbuh in the Magazine “Robin Kurth”, that is printed in Chicago, and the discussions centered on whether there is a historical existence of Christ, and whether he was the figment of the imagination of the ancients, from among previous nations, who merely invented him.[7]

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[5] Sayyed Salman Al-Nadawi, *Al-Risalat Al-Muhammadiyyah*, p.48, third impression, 1393 H., Dar Al-Fatah Bookshop, Damascus.
[6] *Ibid., p.52*
[7] Salman Al-Nadawi, *Al-Risalah Al- Muhammadiyyah*, p.51, Dar Al-Fatah Bookshop, printed in 1973, Damascus.

My appreciation of Dr. Adam has increased and I admired her very much when she said, forcefully and firmly, “It is certain that we reject this profanity and condemn this impudence towards Christ ,pbuh, for his existence is as sure as the existence of the sun in the sky. The holy books have talked of him and have reserved for him, together with his holy mother, a lofty position,. Only a worthless and stubborn renegade denies the existence of Christ. Such views are too trivial to waste our short and precious time in discussing them.”

“However,” Dr Adam went on to say, “in all honesty, I do not deny that there are many question marks associated with the life story of Christ, pbuh, and it is this that has prompted Bodley to say, ‘we know but fragments of the life of Christ, after his mission, and we know nothing about the thirty years that had paved the way for the three years in which he reached his apogee’.”[8]

“Any one who considers what has been written on Christ, pbuh, will find that this view was not confined to Bodley, or others, for it is almost unanimously held. The great scholar Retan has exerted tremendous efforts and found great difficulty and exhaustion to get to know the complete life of Jesus, pbuh. Yet, the life of Christ and his conditions remain a tightly kept secret in the conscience of time, a secret which has not yet been divulged.”[9]

“It must be emphasized that the foregoing in no way detracts from the venerable status of Christ, pbuh, for he lived in an antagonistic environment, whether on the part of the Jews in the midst of whom he lived but who refused to accept him, or

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[8] R. F. Bodley, *The Apostle: The life of Muhammad*, p.6
[9] Salman Al-Nadawi, *Al-Rislah Al-Muhammadiyyah*, p.57

the pagan Roman State that wielded great power and authority and treated him with utmost cruelty."

Dr, Adam paused a little, flipping some papers, as though looking for something in them. Then she held a paper and said, "I am afraid it is our hard luck, or perhaps the hard luck of these great figures that we are unable to grasp their life stories and know many of their details, or even to be sure of the existence of some of them, in the first place."

"This paper which you can see is scanned from the Encyclopedia Britannica and is considered by all researchers among the most reliable of sources in history. This page contains information on Zoroaster of whom the Encyclopedia says, 'It is said that he was the prophet of the Magians and preached the worship of fire. Many are the stories that were known of him, but other than that they are extremely strange, they are quite contradictory.'"

'When he grew old, he secluded himself from people and lived in the Borooz Mountain and remained secluded until he died.'[10]

The Encyclopedia Britannica mentioned him as well. It said that the legend that relates to the unusual life of Zoroaster does not give us a clear picture of his life and does not enable us to historically establish the facts of his life, as it is shrouded with that is unfathomable obscurity. The conclusion reached is that we cannot place him in time and we are in complete ignorance in this respect.

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[10] Encyclopedia Britannica, v.9 p.198, Master Butros Al-Bustani, Dar Al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.

Dr. Adam confronted tens of question marks in respect of the lives of those great figures
and concluded by saying, “I do not intend to dwell on this subject, which probably fill the souls with sorrow.”

She said, “I would like to apologize to them in my name and in your names and would blame a certain party, but I do not know who that party is. In the end, we can only accept such results and concede such facts.”

She expressed the hope that time would reveal unknown pages and forgotten information, although this is not likely for sure, if not totally unlikely. This is because thousands of years separate us from them and so far only scanty information has surfaced. If anything is to appear it would have done so.

“There is no doubt that true facts and information, and only the true ones, constitute the basis of research. If these are not available we cannot give a clear picture of any figures whatsoever, and consequently it would be difficult to present them as an ideal to be emulated.”

Before leaving, she told the audience that she could see how sad they were, which she thought was partly on her account, and expressed thanks for their sympathy. But she said that she had gathered a great many facts and variegated information on one of the great figures of humanity, “in whom we find what we are looking for and satisfy our aspirations in examining his life story.”

She went on saying that this in no way entails pronouncing hasty judgments, although the precise and objective material available on the subject was reassuring, which subject required more research and scrutinization of details and the exerting of

analytical efforts, and said that it was in order to say that patience in this respect was quite commendable.

She concluded by thanking the audience for their attentive listening and patience and greeted the audience, hoping to see them in the following lecture.

The audience looked forward to the promise made by Dr. Adam and the expected details and analysis. But it so happened that the University had invited a visiting professor and in view of his pressing schedule, Dr. Adam ceded the date of her lecture for his sake, as a kind gesture to the visiting professor, though some who are close to her were of the opinion that Dr. Adam welcomed the opportunity, as it gave her more time to prepare her lecture, and this was what did take place.

The Second Lecture
Signs of Relaxation and Generosity of History

The date and topic of the new lecture was announced. Dr. Adam will lecture on Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, in the University Cultural Season.

After welcoming and thanking the audience, she said that she had chosen for her topic Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, . She went on to say, “You might ask why I have chosen Prophet Muhammad, pbuh? What are the justifications for distinguishing him from those we have mentioned in the previous lecture?”

She heard whispers and saw looks on the faces of the audience, which indicated, as a whole her true intuition, proper expression and correctapt assumption.

She began saying, in complete confidence, “As a result of my research, I have discovered four facts, which, I believe, provide, as a whole, satisfactory answers to the questions raised in the previous lecture. I leave it to you to judge, after hearing them.”

“The first is the abundance of detailed and factual information on the life of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, in all phases of his life.. There is no missing link in his life, which lasted sixty three years. Neither are there any of the questions that were raised in the previous lecture when talking about his predecessors among the great figures.

All those who read his life story, and I am one of them, are agreed that it is an open book, before both his followers and his enemies.

The most conspicuous of this description is that a researcher hardly encounters a question mark throughout his life story as a whole, in its most delicate and private aspects. In this respect, I find that I must open the index of the smallest book my hands could lay on, concerning an aspect of the character and manners of the Prophet, pbuh, in order to acquaint ourselves with the details it contains. I must confess that I was almost bored with these details, although you accuse me of being keen on them and seek them. This book is “The Character and Ethics of the Prophet, pbuh,”, which was written by Jaafar bin Hayyan Al-Asfahani, who died in the year 369 H. corresponding to 952 G.

This book contained an accurate description of all the clothes of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, a description of all the tools he used, a minute description of his table manners, his drinks, sleep, entering, leaving, sitting, speech, laughter, tears, dialogue and the way he treated people.

There was also an accurate description of all the members of his body that were visible to his companions, and included an account of the mounts he used to ride and their names and other things, which we need not mention in this context.

Such information was not confined to one or two books. It occurs in hundreds of reliable books, whose authors are well known for their scientific rigor, truthfulness and honesty. I invite any one who wishes to consult these books. This justly confirms that we are here concerned with a personality that is considered an open book in all its pages.”

She went on to say, “It is quite in order, in this context, that I quote some testimonies of my predecessors, who wrote on Prophet Muhammad, pbuh. Thus R. F. Bodley, the

contemporary English author said, ‘We find that the story of Muhammad is abundantly clear.’[11]

History has pronounced its verdict on the life story of the Prophet, pbuh, which story is far beyond legends and forgery. Claude Cahen, Professor of Islamic History at the University of Paris, said, ‘the personality of Muhammad has a historical character that is not found in the case of any other founder of other religions.’[12]

Prophet Muhammad lived in Mecca for more than fifty years, the major part of his life, and his enemies there were by far more numerous than his followers, and none of his enemies denied anything in his eventful life, or claimed that there were obscure pages therein.

History has recorded a dialogue between Abu Sufyan, Mecca’s leader and the notorious enemy of Muhammad, pbuh, before the former had embraced Islam, and the Roman Emperor, in which dialogue Abu Sufyan could not change any facts or change any data, for fear that history would record that he told lies before the Roman Emperor[13], because Muhammad’s life was too well known to be distorted or concealed.”

“ **The Second:** The great many books that were written on his life story throughout 1400 years. There are hundreds of them; anyone can make use of the data-base at the University and benefit from the links connecting the University with other universities to ascertain the truthfulness of this fact. The number he finds may reach four digits, provided one is patient and willing to search. Moreover, if I did not dare to give a firm

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[11] R.F. Bodley, *The Apostle: Muhammad’s Life*, p.6.
[12] Calude Cahen, *History of the Arabs and Islamic Nations*, v.1, p.40.
[13] For more details on this well-known dialogue, see *SaHiiH Al-Bukhari,* under the Section on *how Revelation began*, P 7.

figure because I have no documented data, let me quote from the great historian, Durant, who said in his book on the Story of Civilization that 'the stories reported of Muhammad may fill ten thousand volumes'[14].

An examination of these works will reveal that they have written at different times, places, and by various authors, with different approaches, but all of them contain almost the same facts.

Any difference between them is a matter of drafting, focus, expansion and analysis, as well as the attitude of each author towards these facts, all of which relate to differences in opinion, and are not problematic in the majority of cases."

"The third: The great number of followers round him. Reliable books which deal with the classification of men in terms of their character and reliability, and have had wide circulation, have mentioned that about ten thousand men have kept the company of Muhammad, pbuh, though this companionship varied in terms of duration and nature.

It is fortunate that Anas bin Malek, who kept the company of the Prophet, pbuh, for ten consecutive years, was the last companion to die. It is established that he died in 93 H., which means he lived almost 80 years after the death of the Prophet, pbuh. Moreover, his wife Aisha, his closest spouse, lived after him for almost 45 year, having died in 58 H.

There is also his cousin Abdullah bin Abbas, who was close to him, lived 55 years after his death and died in 68 H. There are many others who had ample opportunity to report on the life of the Prophet, pbuh - all that they remembered of him and saw

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[14] L. Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, v.13, p.22

of him, in addition to others whose number was in the thousands.

There is no doubt that there was a great number of people round him, watching every minor or major thing in his life, even the most intimate aspects of a man's life with his wife.

These details were reported in authentic traditions through uninterrupted, reliable and trustworthy sources. Thanks to such reports all question marks regarding his life were removed.

This fact did not escape the professor of Islamic civilization, Professor Hamilton Jep, who said, 'If it had not been for the traditions, Muhammad's picture would have been , at least general if not remote , at least, in its historical and religious origins. These traditions have portrayed his human aspect, in an abundant collection of living and tangible details.'[15]

This has also prompted the scholar Lora Vencia Vaglery to say, in his reference to the social and economic condition of prophets, 'It would seem that we have no details of the daily life of Moses and Jesus, while we know everything on Muhammad's family life.'[16]

A similar testimony is given by Monte, Professor of Oriental languages at the University of Geneva: 'Rare are the reformers, the details of whose lives are known as those pertaining to Muhammad.'[17]

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[15] *The Apostle in Fair Western Éyes*," p. 146, borrowed from Hamilton's book "*Studies in Islamic Civilization,* p.257.

[16] *The Apostle in Fair Western Eyes*, p.139

[17] Muhammad Kurd Ali, *Islam and Western Civilization,* v.1, p.67, Quoted from Monte's book "*The Present and Future of Islam.*

Such information is corroborated by the fact that they are reported by more than one source, and under various circumstances.

In light of the science of *Isnad* (attribution) and the science which scrutinizes men (*ílm naqd al-rijaal*), the like of which humanity has not known, nor do I pretend to have a wide knowledge of, those acquainted with the principles of these two sciences will be amazed to witness such scrupulous accuracy and impartiality that characterize them.

It is worth pointing out that the Arabs, the nation to whom Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, belongs, are well known for their strong memory among nations. Thus, the great historian George Zaidan, testifies to the strong memory of the Arabs and says that they have conserved, in addition to their annals, those of previous nations, such as those of the people of Áad and Thamud;[18] no wonder they have preserved the details of the life of their Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, who loved them and whom they loved, a love that has no parallel throughout history."

"The Fourth: is that Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, has laid down for his followers a meticulous scientific methodology in the reporting of information. Thus he warned against lying, particularly in reporting facts concerning him, telling them: 'He who reports lies about me shall occupy a place in hell.'[19] This is a severe warning by the Prophet, pbuh, to his followers, urging them to stick to accuracy and to admit only such information as is firmly established as being correct and true, and to shun conjectures, against which he also warns, saying, 'Conjecture is the phoniest type of lying.' [20]

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[18] George Zaidan, *Islamic Civilization*, v.1, p.22.
[19] Reported by Bukhari in the Section dealing with *those who tell lies about the Prophet*, pbuh, Tradition No. 107.
[20] See The Encyclopedia Britannica, v.5, p.660, *Ibid.*

There remains, dear audience, a fifth fact to complete the series of justifications. This relates to the nature of the life story of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh. A consideration of this life story will amply reveal its realism; it is easy for anyone to understand, accept and emulate, if they so desire, without feeling embarrassed or going against instinctive disposition, as is happening and witnessed in the hundreds of millions of Muslims, who follow on the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh.

While this, for example, is not possible for the followers of Buddha, of whom there are hundreds of millions, the scanty information that has reached us on Buddha is confined to the facts that he was a prince living in a palace, that he had a wife and a son, that he abandoned his palace, leaving his wife and son alone, and wandered in the deserts and forests, until he died, a lonely ascetic.[21]

One may ask whether this culture of asceticism still prevails among the nations that believe in him among the Chinese, the Japanese and the Koreans. These nations have set up gigantic industrial states, which means that almost none of them thinks of reviving this culture of asceticism, because following it would paralyze life and take humanity back to centuries of primitive life.

I have come across a statement reported of Buddha, which I do not like his followers to hear from me in these major industrial states: 'My Code is a universal blessing. It is like the sky; there is room in it for all people. However, it is difficult for the rich to follow its path.'[22]

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[22] *Ibid.*, v.5, 660

Christ, pbuh, is well known for inviting people to practice tolerance, forgiveness and forbearance. He is reported to have said, while preaching to his followers: “You have heard the statement: ‘Any eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth,’ but I tell you not to resist evil, but rather, he who slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other cheek, as well; he who wishes to take your garment, let him have it as well; he who exploited you one mile, go with him two miles; he who asks you, give him; and he who wants to borrow from you, do not turn him down.”

“You have heard others say, ‘Love thy relative and hate thy enemy’, but I tell you: love thy enemy, bless those who curse you; be charitable towards those who hate you, and pray to those who wrong you and expel you.”

Dr. Adam gave a significant smile and asked the audience, “Which of the Western or Eastern states, have invariably adopted these teachings, or thought one day to partially apply them, even once in their long history, particularly towards their adversaries? We leave it to ancient and modern history to answer this question. But as far as we are concerned, we proceed with our lecture.

Let me point out, in this context, that these teachings of Christ, pbuh, are not detrimental to his reputation and no one must criticize him on their account. No, and a thousand times no. This is because they emanated from Christ under special circumstances in order to deal with special circumstances. They are teachings springing from their environment, and were successful, at that time, in curbing injustice and revenge, and in restricting the evil among the Israelis in the midst of whom Christ was preaching.

Christ has also attempted to establish a balance in Roman society, in which he lived, for the culture of that society was confined to nurturing the body only at the expense of the spirit. It was a warlike and bloody culture, and it was this that prompted Christ to adopt such principles, which circumstances strongly called for. Hence, the followers of Christ did not assimilate these teachings and were unable to put them into practice.

I have read something interesting in this respect, which I propose to report to you. It was written by the great scholar Jameel Baiham, who wrote, "When, before the advent of Christ, moral chaos was exacerbated, and reached alarming proportions as a result of the corruption that prevailed among both the Jews and the Romans, Christ came as a social reformer and not as a legislator, because neither the Jews nor the Romans lacked legislation. Hence, his message was a call for virtues and a warning against vices, and a promotion of love and peace.[23]

I am also impressed by statements that are appropriate in this context, which were made by the great scholar Sulaiman Al-Nadawi, who divided virtues into two categories: a negative category and a positive one.[24]

He said that secluding oneself from people is a negative virtue, because the person concerned does not harm any of them, but, at the same time, he does not offer any positive good. Moreover, forgiving the mistakes of people is also a negative virtue, but does not offer any positive good, such as giving advice and coming to the rescue of the wronged people. It

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[23] Muhammad Jameel Baiham, *The Philosophy of the History of Muhammad*, p.43.
[24] *The Muhammedan Message*, p.66, *ibid.*

must be pointed out that such virtues were propagated by reformers who antedated Prophet Muhammad pbuh.

In fact they lack universality and balance, which are clearly manifested in the character of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, as I shall soon demonstrate after a short break.

Dr. Adam was more than terrific. She delivered her lecture in full confidence, steadfastness and optimism. She looked happy in her exposition.

What contributed more to her happiness, is her feeling that the audience shared her feelings, and what made her even more pleased and amused was the statement by one who never missed any of her lectures, who said, "One of the five justifications you have touched on would have been enough to show the importance of the study of the life story of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, but it seems you are keen on making us tired in listening, and yet, we greatly appreciate what you say. In any case, I hope you will stick to this method, which is both tiring and enjoyable."

After the break, Dr. Adam began by saying:

"I have noticed a phenomenon, an aspect of which I have touched on a short while ago, namely, that the great figures we have considered had one distinctive quality that was associated with them and on account of which they won the respect of people and became famous. Thus Christ was tolerant, Buddha was ascetic, Alexander the Macedonian was strong, Aristotle was a philosopher, and none of them is known to have another distinctive attribute.

But what is really striking is the fact all these virtues, and others, converged in the person of Prophet Muhammad pbuh.

A consideration of the life story of this Prophet, and going through the pages of his life will certainly discover conclusive evidence that corroborate this fact. This fact I have reached after reading many and variegated books, which I approached, as much as possible without prejudices, though biased towards the true facts.

Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, was the most courageous of men, the most forbearing, the most generous, the most ascetic. He was merciful, just, forgiving, sincere, continent, trustworthy, dignified, smiling, modest, unyielding in matters of principle, and at the same he was even more shy than an innocent young girl.

A reflective, analytic consideration of all these combined virtues that characterize the Prophet, pbuh, clearly indicates that the attribute of greatness is justified only when all of them are combined in a person, because fractional values cannot make greatness, nor can they contribute to the happiness of humanity.

This view has been reinforced when I recollected the views of certain specialists in ethics, to the effect that "Each virtue is reinforced by other virtues."[25]

When a person combines all these virtues – which is the case in Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, one of these virtues stands out and comes to be associated with a person more than others. This fact is also established by the discipline of ethics. In this respect, the great scholar Draz says, "The human soul must practice all these virtues, before specializing in one of them[26]

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[25] Ahmad Izzildin, *Stories of Virtuous Attributes*, p.61

[26] For more details on the attributes of the Prophet, see Muhammad Al-Hofi, *From the Attributes of the Prophet*, pp. 20-40>

,without such attribute predominating on other ones that weaken its effect and reduce its standing, so that all of them remain at their highest degrees, and the most perfect of their qualities.

Dr. Adam paused for a while and went on to say, “I have always been keen on making my lectures smoothly going and easily understood, unlike the academic lectures in the classes. However, it seems that, at times, we have no choice, in view of the nature of the subject. But I promise you to make abundant use of realistic stories and interesting and well established facts.

This being so, and it seems that it is so, at least on certain occasions, I shall do my best to make this lecture as brief as possible, lest the lectures should contribute to mutual oblivion. I shall end my lecture by dealing with an important matter that is closely linked to our subject, though I shall not elaborate too much in respect thereto. I refer to the motives underlying the cultivation of virtuous attributes.

Ethics scholars have considered this matter; and their overwhelming view was that these motives are material benefit, personal happiness, the environment, conscience or power.[27]

I do not intend to probe into these motives, in respect of their values and effect, and whether they are consistent or not. However, it would seem that the fact that Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, has combined all the virtues we have briefly outlined is attributed to prophethood.

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[27] Dr. Muhammad Abdullah Daraz, *The Constitution of Ethics in the Qur'an,* p. 90.

This is because God Almighty is perfect and has all attributes of perfection, such as mercy, generosity, clemency, majesty, forgiveness, etc., and the Prophet is foremost among people to acquire such attributes of God Almighty. Thus the character of the Prophet is not tainted by mundane considerations, such as personal benefit, or his being affected by the environment, or the changes of circumstances.

R. F. Bodley was aware of this fact, without mentioning its cause. Thus he said, "I doubt whether there existed any man other than Muhammad whose external circumstances have so greatly changed, without himself being changed.[28]

Such consistency is easy to understand, when we remember that this greatness in all its aspects emanates from the spring of prophethood. Thus, although we conceded that before prophethood, Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, was a noble person, of honorable and lofty character, yet the emergence of his greatness in his gathering all virtuous attributes in a unique balance in himself, was on account of the prophethood, as we have pointed out.

The foregoing perhaps explains, as well, why the virtues of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, were enduring, everlasting, present at all times and valid everywhere. They were not relevant only to his own epoch and were not confined to the categories for whom they were relevant, and were not engendered by his environment.

These attributes and virtues were reflected in his actions more than in his words. This has made them accessible and familiar to people and capable of application."

[28] R. F. Bodley, *The Apostle: The Life of Muhammad*, p.14.

After a short break, Dr. Adam proceeded with her lecture, but having seen new faces in the hall that she may not have noticed at the beginning of the lecture, she said, “I thank the honorable audience for this perseverance and patience. Allow me to welcome the new faces in particular. It seems to me that, if I am not mistaken, I see them for the first time.

While welcoming them, I would like to draw their attention to the fact that our lectures are an interconnected series. Those who attend only some of them may not form an integrated conception of the subject we are dealing with. However, there are several means of making up.”

Dr. Adam was silent for a while; then she smiled to the audience and said, “I am thinking of availing you with the papers I am using, or at least those that contain texts and figures.” The audience rejoiced at this proposal, but she cautioned, “My proposal does not mean at all that you can dispense with attendance, which is undoubtedly an optional matter, as you well know.”

“I have considered the attributes associated with the Prophet and found that they were quite numerous. Thus there is no sublime attribute in which he does not excel. This conclusion may have caused me some difficulty, because I am inclined to highlight an attribute that distinguished the Prophet, among all the attributes, though we have admitted in a previous lecture that they are all a characteristic of him. But what I mean, here, is an attribute that was more conspicuous than others.

“If anyone should ask why look for one particular attribute to discuss, I say that our approach is to trace, document and analyze information, which takes quite a lot of effort and plenty of time. Hence, it would not be possible to consider all the attributes of Prophet Muhammad pbuh. Moreover, the aim

of these lectures is to determine one particular attribute, if possible, which, if mentioned, Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, is remembered, and if he is mentioned, then such attribute comes to our mind as well.

“I was expecting – on the basis of the exposition in the previous lecture – that I will be able to put my finger on such an attribute. I am pleased to tell you that it seems to me that I have realized what I wanted. This attribute is that of mercy, whose exponents are seen encompassing humanity now and in the past. This is the attribute that is characteristic of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, and which colored the majority of the other attributes. Following are more details and analysis, and I hope that I will not burden you.

“I have followed three paths in searching for and grasping this attribute, and in setting it apart from the other attributes, namely:

The First: Contemplative search in the Holy Qur’an, in which I hoped to find what I was looking for, and was not disappointed. Thus God Almighty has ascribed this attribute to Himself in many verses, and has derived from its root two of His names, which occurred in many verses. Examples are: *Praise be to God, the Sustainer of the worlds, the Merciful the Compassionate* (Al-FatiHah (1-2), and so in the verses: *Verily God is Most Merciful, Most Compassionate to people*. Another verse: *Yet, thy Sustainer is limitless in His forgiveness, full of mercy* (Al-Kahf, 58)

In the aforementioned verses, God Almighty has stressed his attribute of mercy and named Himself as Most Merciful, Most Compassionate, as a bounty and mercy to mankind. In other verses, He says: “*Is it they who would portion out the Mercy of thy Lord. It is We Who portion out between them their*

livelihood in the life of this world; and We raise some of them above others in ranks, so that some may demand work from others. But the Mercy of thy Lord is better than the wealth which they amass. (Al-Zukhrof, 32).

Some exegesists of the Qur'an said, "Wht is meant by Mercy here is the Prophethood and the Revelation. This is reflected in the following verse: "*And thou hadst not expected the Book would be sent to thee except as a Mercy from thy Lord. Therefore, lend thou not support in any way to those who reject (Allah's Message)* (Al-Qassas, 86).

"It is appropriate that I quote the view of an exegesist, to confirm this view and assure ourselves of his view. The great exegesist, Al-Shanqiti, said, 'It is immediately apparent that what is meant by the Mercy of thy Lord is the Prophethood and the Revelation; referring to them as Mercy in the Qur'an occurs frequently."[29]

Moreover, the Qur'an described Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, in the Qur'an as being characterized by the attribute of mercy, as follows: "*Now has come unto you a messenger from amongst yourselves; it grieves him that you suffer, ardently anxious is he over you, to the believers is he most kind and merciful* (Al-Tawbah, 128). Indeed Allah Almighty has considered Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, mercy itself: "*We sent thee not but as mercy to all creatures* (Al-Anbiyaa', 107).

This exposition must have impressed on you the dazzling harmony of these attributes. Thus he Merciful God has sent down a religion that abounds in mercy towards His creatures.

[29] See, Muhammad Al-Amin Al-Shanqiti, *adhwaa' al-bayan fii iidhah al-Qur' an*, Dar Al-Fikr, 1995, Beirut.

It was natural for the one who preaches this religion to be a merciful person. Such person was Prophet Muhammad pbuh.

I do not blame some who consider my words as impressionistic and emotional. I must point out that, before preparing these lectures, I had taken a neutral, unbiased attitude when such matters were brought up and I often used to remain silent unless I had evident proofs that corroborate my beliefs. I hope to succeed in this task and then I leave it to you to make your own judgment.

This quality of mercy is appropriate for the realization of God's purpose in sending the Apostle with this religion. Thus He has sent one who is innately merciful and, hence, he was a mercy from God to humanity in implementing His Shari'ah.[30]

In this context, I have noticed that God Almighty did not describe any of His prophets as merciful, except Prophet Muhammad, pbuh. Thus the Holy Qur'an has mentioned twenty four prophets and described them as possessing the most beautiful and perfect attributes and spoke highly of them wherever mention was made of them, but none of them was described as merciful, despite their other virtuous attributes.

In His wisdom, God has vested Prophet Muhammad alone with the quality of mercy, although all God's prophets were full of mercy in dealing with their people and were keen on planting faith in them. However, my talk here is about that very same attribute of mercy.

The second path: it is related to a consideration of the life story of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, of his sayings and guidance. But more details on this subject will be given in future lectures.

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[30] See Al-Taher bin Ashoor in *Al-TaHriir wa ttanwiir*, v. 4, pp.14-45

What I would like to say here is that the attribute of mercy was manifested in all that emanated from the Prophet, be it his statements or deeds. It is the attribute manifested in all attributes and overwhelms and guides them. Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, used to manifest this attribute in every move and thing he did, as he said of himself, "I am but a gift of mercy,"[31] and I have no doubt whatsoever that when he made that statement he was thinking of God's words: "We did not send thee but as a mercy to all creatures." (Al-Anbiyaa, 107).

The third path: it may look somehow cute and different from the preceding paths. Thus I have asked the students, to whom I teach the philosophy of ethics, to consider the attributes of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, and that each of them should determine the attribute they think more apparent than others.

I was extremely pleased when about 60% had chosen the attribute of mercy. As to those who had chosen an attribute other than that of mercy, such as the attribute of modesty, or benevolence towards others, they had not gone far from the attribute of mercy, because this attribute is closely linked to the attributes they had chosen.

Mercy is associated either with the motives of courage, as true mercy, which is not out of place, emanates only from those who possess courage. It is manifested in benevolence to others and treating them with modesty or forgiving them.

This view is corroborated by the definitions given, by scholars, to this attribute, although I do not wish to address and follow these definitions critically in such lectures – as the definition

[31] Reported by Al-Hakem in *Al-mustadrak* and verified by Sheikh Al-Albani in *Sahiih al-Jamea*

which states that "Mercy is an emotional condition that is felt by those who are tender hearted, and is a beginning of benevolence."[32] The clearest and the easiest definition is that: "it is a tenderness that a creature finds in his heart that prompts him to be sympathetic and benevolent towards others, to console them and to alleviate their suffering."[33] It is the mercy that is appropriately applied as a description to a person.

However, I have come across a definition by Ibn Al-Qayyem, which says, "Mercy is an attribute that requires the bringing of benefits and interests to a person, though against his will. Such is true mercy. The most merciful of people is he who compels himself to protect your interest and guards you against harm.[34]

Ibn Al-Qayyem has added another dimension to the concept of mercy, as you see, i.e. it means practicing mercy on those one loves, even if such one does not like that, as in the case of a doctor with his patient, particularly dentists. Every one of us has a story to tell about dentists.

Before ending her lecture, Dr. Adam, contrary to her habit, asked the audience, after thanking them for their attendance and attentive listening, if they wish to make any suggestion or express a particular view point, before proceeding with her lecture and said, "But allow me to put forwards a suggestion before you, namely, that as of now we shall use, in talking about Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, the term 'The Prophet of Mercy' and I believe that you agree and your conviction will grow more and more."

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[32] Abou Al-Baqaa' Ayyoob bin Moosa Al-Kafwy, *universals*, v.1, p.471, Al-Risalat Institution, Beirut.

[33] Musa Abdo Usairy, *Mercy in the Qur'an, p.22,* Al-Rushd Bookshop, Riyadh

[34] Ibn Qayyem Al-Jawziyyah, *Rescuing a distressed person from the traps of Satan*, v.2., 173, Dar Al-Fikr, Beirut.

A member of the audience stood up and said, “We appreciate this suggestion of yours. We had a discussion about the causes of misunderstanding the life story of the Prophet of mercy, pbuh, on the part of non-Muslims, particularly in Western countries in general, and we strongly hope to hear the view of our illustrious lecturer on the subject. We are encouraged to make this request by the fact that one who had participated with us in the discussion on the subject, told us that he had heard something on the subject, in one of your previous interventions.

Dr Adam welcomed the suggestion and the audience took it that she had something to say on the matter. In fact, she told the audience that she would try her best to talk on the subject at the beginning of the next lecture.

Third Lecture
Misunderstanding, why?

It was time for the Third Lecture, and the audience started coming in numbers exceeding those that attended previously. When Dr. Adam walked into the hall, the audience welcomed her and she reciprocated their greeting. She began as follows:

"We can briefly sum up the reasons why non-Muslims have adopted a negative attitude towards the Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, particularly in the Western world." After a brief silence, she asked whether this was not what the majority of the audience wanted, and whether it was not the subject they expected her to talk about in her third lecture. In the mean time she kept smiling at the audience and encouraged them to express their opinions.

A group of the audience answered in the affirmative, adding that that was what they had agreed on and expected and thanked her for her speedy response.

Dr. Adam began by saying that she did not deny that that matter was connected with the subject at hand, though she did not wish to elaborate on it for the time being, as she might have to revert to it in future lectures, in the process of exposition and analysis of some of the attitudes of the Prophet, pbuh,.

The first thing that drew her attention in this matter was an opinion expressed by the English historian and writer R.F. Bodley, who was to her a virtual key, as he stated that it was unfortunate that the Prophet of Mercy came after the advent of

Christ.[35] The common belief was that any prophet who comes after Christ is phony and the religion he propounds is not true, and will be at the expense of other former religions. This was frankly expressed by a Western thinker: "Muhammad was capable of establishing a political and religious empire, at the expense of Moses and Christ.[36]

This illusion is built on previous illusions, the first being their assumption that the message of the Prophet of Mercy,pbuh, is contrary to that of Christ, which is not true. The second is their ignorance that Christ, pbuh, has announced the good tidings of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, and urged his followers to believe in him. All the Gospels included references to the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, and the good tidings of his advent which was close at hand. This may be verified by referring to the Gospel of Mathews (24 – 44, The Gosel of John (6:27), and many other references.[37]

This good tiding is expressly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an: *"And remember, Jesus, son of Mary who said, 'O children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Torah and giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad.'*" As-Saff, 6).

On the other hand, the Holy Qur'an spoke very highly of Christ, praised him, exalted him and venerated him. The different views held by those who imagine the existence of a difference between Christ, pbuh, and the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh,, exists only in the minds who have no appreciation of

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[35] Bodley, The Apostle: *The Life of Muhammad,* p.12

[36] Dr. Bassem Khafaji, *Why do they hate him?* V.1 1427 H. – 2006 G.

[37] For further information on these good tidings, see Abdul Ahad Al-Ashuri, *Muhammad in the Bible,* translted by Fahmy Shamma, Qatar, Dar Al-Ulum Press Establishment, 1990.

the facts, or those who were prejudiced against the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh.

On this occasion, Dr, Adam said "I wish the followers of Christ would consult what the Prophet of Mercy says about Christ, through the verses of the Qur'an and the Prophet's traditions, and to treat him in the way he treated Christ, which, I think is only fair, and to treat Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, in the way Muslims treat Christ , pbuh,. This, my dear audience is a fair and just invitation."

One wonders whether the followers of Christ are aware that Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, has strongly condemned the Jews who were his neighbors in Median on account of the abominations they ascribed to Christ's mother, at a time when there was no relations or neighborliness between him and the followers of Christ. The Qur'an has recorded this condemnation of the Jews, when it mentioned some of their sins, which included what Allah Almighty said of them: "*That they rejected Faith and that they uttered against Mary a grave false charge* (Al-Nisaa, 156).

The second thing that has led to this misunderstanding is that non-Muslims have looked at the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, in light of descriptions that stuck in their minds concerning their great figures, which descriptions came to be considered as virtual criteria.

Thus the followers of Christ saw nothing in Christ except his tolerance and forgiveness, so much so that they considered that his greatness lies in his loss.[38] But Dr. Adam said, "I reject the statement that a prophet loses before his people. The same

[38] Muhammad Sharif Al-Sheibani, *The Messenger in the Fair Orientalist Studies*, p. 62; v.1 1988, Dar Al-Alhadarah, Beirut.

thing applies to the followers of Buddha; it had stuck in their minds that his qualities were those of a great saint, the most conspicuous being his asceticism and his abandoning of the present life and its pleasures."

Those have thought that the one who would come after Christ would necessarily be his opposite, particularly if his conduct seemed to suggest lack of mercy and tolerance, in their opinion. Thus they were under the impression that he would be domineering, thirsty for revenge, lacking mercy or tolerance. Thus, some of them, unknowingly and without reflection, described the Prophet of Merci, pbuh, as having such attributes,. The same applies to the followers of Buddha and others."

Dr. Adam went on to say, "I say in all clarity and frankness that if greatness is synonymous with the monasticism of priests, their tolerance towards their adversaries, their forgiveness of the wrong doers and neglecting their reformation; if greatness means the asceticism of Buddha, who abandoned his wife and his home and wandered in the forests; and if greatness means the torturing of oneself by the Hindu priests, in refraining from eating and sleeping for several days – if such things are the exponents of greatness, then the Prophet of Mercy would not be considered great, because he lacks such qualities, because, in such case, he would not be a reformer who guides people to virtues and distances them from vices. He would rather be great and remote from their conditions, good only in himself, and merely earning their admiration or surprise. This being the case, they are undoubtedly justified; but in such case, the reformer would lose his role and his function would cease to exist. This is clearly apparent in the life of Buddha, who abandoned life and

died in seclusion. This is also the case with Zoroaster, who secluded himself from people in a mountain until he died.[39]

This behavior does not please the Prophet, pbuh,: neither does it please his followers, because this would overburden them and would create an insurmountable barrier between the conduct of their Prophet and their own conduct. The greatness of the Prophet of Mercy lies in his realism and simplicity. Ignorance of these facts, and the abnormal criteria by which greatness is judged, may perhaps explain why non-Muslims have a problem with the Prophet of Mercy.

The third factor, with which I shall conclude my lecture, has to do with old legacies and backgrounds. I leave it to Dr. Alexi Joravisky, for whom I have great respect, to expound this matter from his own point of view, which maintains that, in the Middle Ages, Europe's literature on Muslims was mostly recorded by Christian clergy, who based their views on extremely divergent sources, such as the folkloric stories of heroes, pilgrims and saints, as well as the defensive polemic - theological works of Eastern Christians, the testimonies of some Muslims and the translations of their thinkers and scholars.

In most cases information was taken out of context and presented to the European reader. In this manner, facts were deliberately distorted in some cases and unintentionally at other times, in the zealous and hasty quest for "the Problem of Islam" that had dominated religious - ideological subjects in the Middle Ages.[40]

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[39] Master Bustani, The Encyclopedia, v.9, p. 198, Dar Al-Fikr, Beirut

[40] Dr. Alexi Joravsky, *Islam and Christianity*, book No. 215 in the series of älam al-ma'rifat, The National Council of Culture, Arts and Literature, Kuwait, November 1996.

Montgomery Watt agrees with this analysis and said that in the Middle Ages there had existed in the consciousness of the Europeans the features of the following picture of Islam: It is a creed invented by Muhammad. This picture is full of lies and deliberate distortion of facts. Thus it is termed as the religion of predestination and moral degeneration, the abuse of carnal pleasures and lust. It is the religion of violence and cruelty. He went on to say that Islam was portrayed as an ugly and evil type that is totally different and contradictory with the ideal type of Christianity, which is the true religion that is characterized by strict ethics and the spirit of peace, and that it is a creed that is propagated peacefully and not by the force of arms.[41]

In light of this analysis, we can easily understand what Professor Southert has said when he talkerd on the general tendency that prevailed in the scientific environment of the West, when he says, “The only thing we should not expect to find, during those ages, is the academic liberal spirit, or the human research that characterized many endeavors of research that related to Islam in the past hundred years.[42]

Together, these factors have contributed to the misunderstanding of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh,. No doubt there are others, of various force and effect. I think the clearest and most effective was the third, which was clearly expounded by two eminent orientalists, who have studied the life story of the Prophet, pbuh.

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[41] Montgomery Watt, *The Effect of Islam on Europe in the Middles Ages,* p.301, Moscow, 1976.

[42] Muhammad Sharif Al-Shaibani, *The Western View of Islam in the Middle Ages*, by Southert, quoted from the Book on the Apostle in the fair Orientaist studies, p.27, first impression, 1988, Dar Al-Hadhara, Beirut.

In any case, I do not wish to dwell too long on this matter, which I have tackled only because I was asked about it, because my approach is based on the exposition of the truth, to the best of my ability, and to put it before those whose love and respect I reciprocate, which is a great satisfaction and pleasure to me.

While I recognize that there is a conflict between various reports of information, which is the result of the conflict between cultures, which they regrettably term as the conflict of civilizations, yet I firmly believe that it is the true information that survives, because it embodies the factors of its strength and survival.

I have realized, through discussions with some colleagues, that true information imposes itself and forces respect to it; indeed it confers respect in the academic circles on those who are interested in it and respect it.

If anyone tries to belittle information, the truth of which has been transmitted from one generation to another, they would be belittling themselves in fact. This is one of several reasons that made eminent professors concede the truth of information that they do not like, but allowed themselves to elaborate on their interpretation, to their liking, and, at times, to force impossible meanings upon them. But this, in any case, is another matter."

As Dr. Adam was preparing to resume her lecture, she looked happy, buoyant, and full of energy, as though that lecture was her first. This impression was corroborated when she said, "The previous lectures may be considered mere introductions to what is forthcoming, as we shall concentrate on the attribute of mercy and its manifestations in the life of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh."

“It would be proper, dear audience, to shed some light on the life of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, before embarking on these lectures. He is Muhammad, son of Abdullah, son of Abdul Muttaleb, son of Hashem, whose lineage goes back to God’s Prophet Isma’il, who lived in Mecca and was the son of God’s Prophet, Abraham.

Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, is a member of the most famous and honorable Arab tribe of his time. It is the tribe of Bani (children of) Hashem of Quraish. His mother is Aminah, daughter of Wahab, of Bani Zuhrah, a well known Arab tribe.

Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, was born in 570 G., as established by the majority of the authoritative historical sources, though some scholars believe that it was 571 G. I do not consider this a difference, because he was born towards the end of 570.

Holy Mecca was his birth place. It is an ancient city in the Arabian Peninsula, in Asia. I have found, in the results of pieces of research and studies based on satellite pictures and space ships, that Mecca is the centre of the circle, in relation to Earth. Such studies are accessible to those who are interested in ascertaining this amazing fact.

His father died while he was still in the womb of his mother. Thus he was born an orphan, and was the only son to his mother, who took care of him till her death, when he was six years old. Thereafter, he was supported and cared for by his grandfather Abdul Muttaleb. When Muhammad, pbuh, was eight years old, his grandfather died and his uncle Abu Taleb, joined him to his children and cared for him as though he was one of his own children.

As a youth, Muhammad, bpuh, began to work to support himself. Thus, he tended sheep for the people of Mecca and later on he engaged in trade, traveling beyond the Arab Peninsula. Ever since he was young he was known, among his people, , as truthful and trustworthy.

He then managed the trade of an honorable lady of Quraish, Khadijah bint Khwailed, and he was destined to marry her. She was forty and he was twenty five years old at the time.

She gave birth to four daughters and two sons, lived to be sixty five and was the only wife he had in her life time.

All his sons and daughters died during his life, except one, Fatimah, who died six months after his death.

When Muhammad, pbuh, was forty, God's revelation of Islam was descended upon him and he began preaching Islam to people for thirteen years in Mecca and then moved to Medina, about 500 kms from Mecca after the majority of Medina's population adopted Islam and were historically known as the *Ansaar* (The Helpers).

The Prophet, pbuh, kept preaching Islam for twenty three years and established an Islamic State in the Arab Peninsula.

He died when he was sixty three years old and was buried in Medina in 633 G.

Throughout all his life, he lived simply in matters of food, drink, and clothes. Sometimes, he and his family would not

find anything to eat for days. He was modest and close to people, whom he loved and who reciprocated his love.[43]

At the time, the life of humanity was deplorable as unanimously reported by books on the history of nations and peoples. Virtues were non-existent and many forms of vices, such as the killing of daughters and illicit marriages were rampant; the strong dominated the weak, wrong doing and aggression prevailed; wars broke out for the most trivial of reasons. Such ugly conditions spared no environment at the time.

While we cannot go into details of all the features of this corruption and degeneration, for lack of space and space, and lest we should be distracted from our original subject, we nevertheless cannot totally disregard these facts, because they help us understand a great many issues. Hence, an understanding of the present sometimes requires that we invoke the past. This being the case, allow me to exemplify by considering one aspect which I believe would give a clear picture of that condition. This is the status of women at that time, which I propose to deal with very briefly[44], but allow myself to be biased to my gender, in this respect.

Arab women in the Arab Peninsula – the environment in which the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, has lived – has suffered from the ugliest forms of wrong doing, as sometimes young females were buried alive in the sand.

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[43] For further information, see the following books: Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wan Nihaayah*; Ibn Qayyem Al-Jawziyyah, *Zad Al-Maáad fii Huda Khayr Al-Íbaad*; Husseing Haikal, *Hayat Muhammad.*

[44] For further information, see Abul Hassan Al-Nadawi, *The Prophet's Biography*, p.27 ff, Islamic Distribution and Publication House, Cairo, first impression.

The Holy Qur'an has recorded this abominable practice in the following verse: "*When the female (infant), buried alive, is questioned for what crime she was killed*" (Al-Takwir, 8-9). The woman was considered part of the furnishings of a house; when her husband died, his relatives would inherit her, as though she was a piece of furniture.

The woman fared no better in the environments neighboring that of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh,. Thus the Romans, to the West of the Arab Peninsula, allowed fathers to kill their wives in what was known to them as the marriage of sovereignty[45], and fathers were allowed to abandon their newly born baby girls, even if this meant leaving them on the road until they died. This is not surprising, for Roman society was known for its culture of brutality and pugnacity, while mercy did not have the least value.

As to Persian society, to the east of the Arab Peninsula, suffice it to say that the principles of Mazdocism were prevalent and advocated profligacy and illicit marriage between close relatives, making it lawful for a brother to marry his sister. Further east, in India, we find that the woman was burned alive, after the death of her husband, as there was no meaning for her survival after him. On the other hand, the woman was despised in Greek society, so much so that one of their philosophers said, "A woman's name must be imprisoned at home just as her body should be imprisoned."

Dr. Adam said that she did not wish to dwell on this matter, which does not appeal to all present. She merely gave certain hints that confirm that those societies were deprived of the manifestations of mercy and humanity. In them there prevailed injustice and cruelty.

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[45] Dr. Mustafa Al-Sibaii, *The Woman between Jurisprudence and the Law*, p. 16.

William Mure has summed up the condition of those times as follows; "Reform was unthinkable at the advent of thr Prophet Muhammad. We know of no success and reform as that he left upon his death."[46]

However, if there were at all some instances of mercy and tolerance, dispersed here and there, which we do not deny, they, nevertheless, remain isolated cases that are almost indiscernible and had no effect on society, as against the pictures of injustice, domination and hostility that prevailed at the time on a large scale.

God has sent the Prophet of Mercy in these environments and to those peoples, as a mercy to them, and sent down to them a religion that is the very embodiment of mercy. This encourages us to say that the beginning was there. It is the one thousand mile trip, whose first step was there. It is the voyage of humanity to the world of mercy and compassion. In fact this is not a sentimental talk that springs from void. It is rather the fruit of research and analysis, and judgment rests with the listener, whom I respect and trust.

The Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, has, from the dawn of his call, started spreading mercy among people, although the first environment in which he lived – Mecca – preaching for thirteen years, was hostile to him all the way through with all its might, where there was no place for mercy, except certain isolated manifestations prompted by Arabian values, whose manifestations had not vanished despite the prevalence of cultures that were contrary to those values that had become odd and bizarre. In his mission, he had no helpers with the

[46] William Mure, *The Life of Muhammad*, quoted from Abdul Rahman Azzam's book *The Hero of Heroes,* p.11.

exception of persecuted individuals, who were increasing every day, despite the injustice and persecution they were exposed to.

The manifestations of the mercy of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, started with both his followers and enemies, from the first day of his preaching. This fact has attracted the attention of those involved in the study of his life. This was manifested by his commitment and that of his followers not to retaliate in the face of the abuse of their enemies, such attitudes having been in implementation of God's instructions: "*Hast thou not turned thy thought to those who were told* ***to hold back their hands (from fight) but establish regular prayers…(Al-Nisaa',***77); and in another verse: "***But turn away from them and say 'Peace / But soon shall they know."*** (Al-Zukhrof, 89); and yet in another verse, God has ordered the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, and his followers to forgive: "***But forgive and overlook"*** (Al-Baqarah, 109).

Ever since the first days, mercy was present and manifest in this approach, so that people would be aware that the decisive word is for principles, and that conflict is only a conflict of beliefs, and that survival is for the fittest, without any exterior influence in terms of force or other effects, and the Prophet, pbuh, is determined to follow this path, though he knew that his adversaries would not accept it. Moreover, the Prophet has seen all that represents good and tolerance in this path, which is based on forgiveness, patience and tolerance. This is because those who believe in him and those who reject him belong to one community, being united by family and family links, and may live in one and the same house.

It was out of the Prophet's mercy for them that he forbade his followers to fight them and retaliate, so that brother would not kill brother, friend would not kill friend and neighbor would not kill neighbor, as far as that was possible.

This unique and exceptional attitude in this environment continued several years, as people in these environments used to settle their problems, even the trivial ones, by fighting. In fact, the enemies of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, have entertained such intentions and said so quite openly: "It is as it were that you desire that difference should escalate between us to the point of brandishing swords on one another until we destroy ourselves."[47] And no one would survive. But they did not know that the Prophet had other ideas and an unfamiliar approach, which he would brandish in their faces, rather than brandishing swords.

The Prophet made this clear when his followers asked him to be allowed to defend themselves in the face of the injuries they were exposed to. Thus they would say, "O Prophet of God, we were mighty and revered when we set up gods with God, but when we attained belief we became humiliated." But the Prophet said, "I am ordered to forgive. Do not fight these folks."

Thus, whether they like it or not, they are now before a new approach that confronts differences – albeit unilaterally – with mercy, tolerance and forgiveness.

In this attitude the Prophet, pbuh, has signaled to humanity, past and present, that mercy would create the proper

[47] Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wan Nihayah*, v.3, p. 68.

atmosphere for dialogue and understanding among people, despite their differences in terms of views and races.

Hatred blinds people; the voice of might renders people deaf, and the consequence is the prevalence of the law of the jungle.

The attribute of mercy in the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, was not reflected only in a personal behavior, without considering those who were around him, as is the case in some great figures. Such figures made virtuous manners personal attributes that distinguished them from their fellow human beings, who continued as they had been previously, such as the asceticism of Buddha, for example, so that it might be surmised they are the manners of the elite and have nothing to do with the ordinary people, who are not required to acquire such manners.

The Prophet, pbuh, has acquired these manners, and then ordered people to follow suit and emulate his words and deeds, so much so that it may be said that without hesitation the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, has through his behavior, created an environment in which the attribute of mercy grows up and the culture of people being merciful towards one another gradually spreads among people and becomes a social trait, after it had been an individual, weak and secluded character – characterizing a few of them. Is it not a fact that the conduct of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, is to be considered a message to reformers and to the wise, within human communities at all times and in al places. Such conduct involves the need for those people to propagate the virtues that characterize them and for exerting efforts for persuading people to adopt them, not to be satisfied with possessing such virtues alone and leaving people as they are.

The Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, has exerted all sorts of efforts in order to firmly establish these virtues among men, despite the

harm and hardship he and his followers had been exposed to, at the hands of enemies with cruel and unyielding disposition, who objected to his person. The Holy Qur'an has recorded such objection and exposed their cruelty and the evil they harbored inside them: "*Why is not this Qut'an sent to some leading ma of the two (chief) cities?" (Al-Zukhrof, 31.* They objected to the principles of his call and objected to his followers.

His enemies put dirt on his head, while he was prostrating, so that he could remove it. It was his daughter who came and removed it. Once he was beaten and spat on and perpetually exposed to ridicule.[48]

Such enemies of the Prophet have also ridiculed the principles he was advocating – his call for the worship of one God. This is recorded in the Holy Qur'an: "*Has he made gods (all) into one God? Truly this is a strange thing.*" (Sad, 5).

They also exposed his followers to the ugliest forms of torture and killed Sumayyah bint Khabat, after torturing her.[49] At this point Dr. Adam paused and looked at the audience, smiling, and showing signs of emotions and said, "I am pleased to side, this time in this lecture, with my gender, to tell you that a woman was the first to sacrifice herself for the sake of the teachings of the Religion of Mercy. Then her husband, Yasser, died under various forms of torture which continued for long periods of time."

She went on to say, "Before I proceed with the exposition of these events I would like to point to an important matter of

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[48] Ibn Hisham, *The Prophet's Biography,* v.1, p.395; and see Dr. Muhammad Ali Al-Salabi, *The Prophet's Biography, an exposition and analysis of facts and events*, pp.288-291, first impression, Dar Al-Iman, Alexandria.

[49] See Dr. Mahdi Rizqallah, *The Prophet's Biography in Light of the Original Sources,* p. 186, first impression, 1992, King Faisal Research Center, Riyadh.

methodology, which, in brief, relates to the fact that when I narrate these events and stories, I aim to leave it to you to deduce, yourselves, the lessons that reflect the way mercy was propagated among people.

There is one other matter that is just as important, namely, that the nature of these cultural lectures requires the mentioning of these true and well established stories, as people's minds appreciate hearing them, particularly in view of the fact that we have looked for similar ones in the lives of great figures who preceded the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh,, but did not find any of them.

I conclude with a third matter, and apologize for this digression. When I was a young student, I used to love to hear such stories from the lecturer because, in my view, they make the point more easily and rapidly, and I assume that your are, just like me." A member of the audience said something that indicates concurrence with what she said.

I must not omit to mention also a picture of torture to which a woman was exposed at the hands of the Meccans. This woman is Um Salamah, who later on became a wife of the Prophet, pbuh, after the death of her husband. I will let her tell her story herself. 'When Abu Salamah – meaning her husband – decided to migrate to Medina, he mounted me and my son on a camel and headed to Medina. Some members of my family, the Banu Mughirah, intercepted us and would not let him take me, their daughter. When my husband's folks, Banu Assad, saw what my people had done, they swore they would not leave *their* son with them if they were to take *her* by force.

So they started, each side pulling my son in their direction, until they wrenched his arm and my husband's folks took him. I was taken by my people, who separated me from my husband

and my young son after having dislocated his arm. I used subsequently to go out to the outskirts of Mecca and weep all day, for a year or so."[50]

I do not wish to comment on this story. It is enough that it is a tragic picture that is self-evident.
The response of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, was to advocate tolerance and mutual mercy, which is hard to achieve. But the Qur'an, which was being revealed at this time in Mecca, had a role in spreading the culture of mercy. It urged people to observe patience. It narrated to the Muslims the stories of the believing predecessors from former nations, by way of consolation.

What is also worth noting is that the Holy Qur'an has never called for the severance of family ties, as between those who adopted Islam and those who did not, and neither did it permit Muslims to ostracize them or to refrain from being benevolent and gracious to those who were fighting against the Prophet, pbuh, and his followers.

There is some query on my mind, which I would like to put before you, and which I, truly, did not find anyone who mentioned it. Do you not notice a clear similarity between the Message of Christ , pbuh, and the Message of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, in Mecca, both having preached forgiveness and forbearance?

I may be going too far if I say that the phenomenon of tolerance and forgiveness was more pronounced in the Message of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, than in the Message of Christ, as there was a clear enmity between the Prophet of

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[50] *Ibid.*, v.1, p.477, with some adaptation. Dr, Al-Omary, *The True Prophet's Biography,* v.1, p202 ff., with some adaptation.

Mercy, pbuh, and his opponents, and despite the constant request of his followers to be allowed to fight their enemies, which request was met with insistence on adherence to such manners and imposing them on his followers. He kept insisting on adherence to mercy, despite the many provocations that emanated from his enemies in Mecca, and despite the torturing his followers had been exposed to.

This is a message to those who have misunderstood the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, and were under the illusion that his Message was the opposite of that of Christ. I am struck by a statement by the eminent English writer Bernard Shaw, who has understood this fact and said, "I have studied Muhammad as an astounding man and found that he was remote from being contrary to Christ."[51]

Things continued in this manner, the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, confronting his enemies with forgiveness and mercy, while they were confronting him and his followers with cruelty. Such cruelty assumed severe proportions, seven years after his mission, when his enemies in Mecca decided to besiege the Prophet and his followers, and all those who sided with them from amongst his relatives, in a dale known as the Gorge of Abu Taleb, with a view to isolating them from the outside world, and to boycott then economically and socially.

They succeeded in that and the isolation and siege continued for three years, which were severe and dreadful to the Prophet and those who were with him.[52] But the Prophet did not change his conduct. Thereafter, the fruits of mercy, whose

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[51] Al-Husseini Maadi, *The Messenger in fair Western Eyes*, first impression, 2006, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Arabi, Damascus, Cairo.

[52] See Ibn Hisham, *The Biography of the Prophet, v.1, p.430;* and Dr, Ali Al-Salabi, *The Biography of the Prophet*, p. 347 ff; and see the Biography of the Prophet in light of the original sources, p.194 ff, with some adaptation

seeds he had implanted in that environment, and took real care of them, with his words and deeds, began to blossom.

Thus mercy began to stir in the hearts of a number of those opposing him and they decided to end the siege and cancel the isolation.

The Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, and his followers emerged victorious when many people in and outside Mecca sympathized with them on account of their suffering and his enemies felt embarrassed and lost, as their cruelty was defeated in the face of the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, and his peaceful attitude. Thus their cruelty has misfired.

Dear audience,

I an afraid I have dwelt too long on the subject in this lecture. Allow me to conclude by saying that the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, has created an environment wherein mercy has flourished to become a culture that spread to encompass the people. He has succeeded in making mercy a means to protect his companions and used it as a weapon that enabled him to defeat his enemies on several occasions, as you have seen, which was a conduct unknown to people before.

Meanwhile, a member of the audience stood up and thanked her for her perseverance and asked if he could ask her a question, which permission was granted forthwith. He said, “There is no doubt that we are considering a great personality, that excels in the establishment of patience and the spreading of mercy in an environment that rejected it. But what if one who has listened to this lecture would say that what we have seen in the conduct of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, was neither mercy nor tolerance, but was a form of surrender and acceptance of reality, because he had no choice except to adopt

that attitude, in view of the paucity of his followers and his weak potentials. Hence, he had no alternative but to face injury with patience and to avoid, by all means, clashing in Mecca with his opponents, who outnumbered him and his followers and were more powerful than them."

Some of the audience looked towards the speaker, as though in confirmation of what he said, and waited to hear the opinion of Dr. Adam, who welcomed the intervention of the speaker, and asked the audience if they had heard what the speaker had said, and some of them replied in the affirmative.

She said, "I believe today's lecture gave some answers to this question. But in order to arrive at an answer one has to read between the lines and requires an analysis of the events we have discussed and those that are forthcoming after the conditions of the Prophet would change from weakness to strength. In this connection, I have just remembered an opinion adopted by many Muslim scholars, to the effect that the Prophet, pbuh, had never been weak or powerless before his opponents. This is evidenced by the fact that had he so wished, they would all have perished in one moment.

The narrators of the Prophet's traditions have reported a tradition which they unanimously considered to be authentic. It stated that God had sent an angel to the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, after his people's belying him had escalated, proposing to him to destroy all of them. But the Prophet, pbuh, strongly refused that.[53] If the change of attitude had depended on

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[53] The origin of the tradition appears in Muslim's Compilation, which was quoted at length. It stated that when the Prophet returned from Taef, saddened by what its people had done to him, God sent Gabriel with the Angel in charge of the mountains, who said, 'If you so wish, O Muhammad, I would crush them between two mountains,' but the Prophet , pbuh, said, 'I am hoping that God would let them give birth to a progeny that would worship God and would not ascribe any partner to Him. See also SaHiH Muslem, who reported that tradition, in the Section on *the harm that the Prophet has sustained*;

power, the attitude of the Prophet, pbuh, would have changed immediately after God had supplied him with that extraordinary power.

However, this does not negate the weakness of the Muslims at the time, as people would think. Therefore, I propose that we split this task: you search in the events we have discussed; these may provide some answers to that legitimate query, and I, for my part, would provide answers to this question in light of further readings, with a view to answering it, in the next lecture.

I shall give you the opportunity to express your points of view in the next lecture. Thank you and good bye

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see also Dr. Akran Dhiyaa Al-Omari, *The Authentic Biography of the Prophet*, v.1, p.186.

Fourth Lecture
Signs of the Innate Mercy in the Souls of Men

The audience who were following these lectures kept arriving in the hall. Dr. Adam arrived before some of them. An observer of these lectures will notice that the Fourth Lecture is different from the previous one. Some of the audience were quite alert. They entered the hall and kept consulting their notes. There were also side discussions, most of which were not heard.

Dr. Adam began her lecture by saying, “The first ten minutes, dear audience, are reserved for you to discuss the query brought up at the end of the previous lecture.”

One of the audience, who was, presumably, in his sixties, stood up and said, “n my opinion, I think the answer to the query should be postponed, as it is not easy to clarify this point before becoming acquainted with the remainder of the life story of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, and pondering its events.

I hope the others will not be prevented from expressing their opinion.” Then he thanked Dr. Adam, who, in turn, made no comment, but merely smiled and reciprocated the gesture and thanked him for his intervention.

At this point, a woman, who seemed hesitant and looked around her to see if anyone desired to talk before her, but saw no one, said "The honorable speaker’s opinion is fine and is appreciated; however, it seems to me that we have come across some events that serve our cause and should not be ignored.

The path of forgiveness and mercy followed by the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, was not his own choice but was ordered by God Almighty, as we have seen in the previous Qur'anic instructions. The Prophet has definitely complied with and adhered literally to them. This means this attribute was not an outcome of circumstances, potentials or opinion on the part of the Prophet, and the events that will follow after the conditions of the Prophet, pbuh, have changed will prove that.

I hope I have been able to get my idea across, and I certainly do not possess Dr. Adam's potentials and her ability of expression." Dr. Adam thanked her and highly praised her proper view.

Dr. Adam then said that there was time left for a third person to express his view; thereupon one stood up at the back of the hall and said aloud, "I am that person." All the audience turned towards him and he said, "It seems to me that if the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, had wanted to retaliate to the harmful deeds, he could have done that. You will remember that his followers asked him more than once to permit them to use force in self-defense, but he did not give them permission. He told them clearly and openly that he had not been given permission yet. So, it is not a question of weakness and incapacity. Thank you."

Then Dr. Adam said, "I apologize; I did not mean to prevent anyone from expressing their view, when I limited the time to ten minutes. So I invite, again, anyone who wishes to express an opinion to do so."

A young person, who was known to Dr. Adam, because he was one of her students at the University, said enthusiastically, "What was it that prevented the followers of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, who used to be tortured during the day, to

avenge themselves from their enemies during the night, for instance, and we know the nature of the place? It is definitely, in terms of its potentials, unlike any city known to us these days. Thank you.”

Dr. Adam admired the enthusiasm of the speaker and his swift intervention and felt that he had attracted the attention of the audience. So she thanked him and said a few words of encouragement and then proceeded. “Dear audience, I am very pleased these moments. I cannot tell whether my pleasure derives from the opinions I have heard, which clearly indicate your assimilation of what I say, or whether it springs from your growing and increasing appreciation of these lectures, as I notice. This is because all of us look forward to seeing the sequence of events, to see if they confirm the statement that mercy is an innate attribute that characterizes the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, one that does not alter or change, or whether they confirm the statement that mercy and tolerance were the result of weakness and incapacity.”

“Dear audience,

From the very start, the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, has established the outline of what is known in modern terminology as a theory of the ethics of mercy, which is clear from his words and deeds. I propose to expound them by adducing the following manifestations:

1. Through constantly reminding his followers that God Almighty is Merciful and Compassionate, thorough the persistent reading of the Qur’an. Suffice it to say that a Muslim reiterates the phrase “Merciful, Compassionate” about thirty times daily in the compulsory and voluntary prayers, when reading *Al-FatiHat* (the opening surah) of the Qur’an in

every cycle of his prayers. The reminiscence of God's Mercy prompts a Muslim to seek to acquire such attribute.

In a manifestation of God Almighty's mercy to all his creatures, He has sent down a portion of His Mercy to the earth for those creatures. This was made clear by the Prophet, pbuh, when he said, "God has divided mercy into 100 parts. He kept for himself 99 parts and sent down to earth one part. It is this part that is reflected in the mutual mercy of creatures towards one another, as exemplified by the mare raising its hoof from its pony for fear it would hurt it."[54]

"Reference to a mare's mercy towards its pony is a subtle sign of the mutual mercy among animals, and men are more needful of such mutual mercy, because they are more pernicious towards one another in the absence of mercy and its replacement with brutal force and hatred."

"2. The Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, was keen on reminding his followers of the standing and importance of mercy and that it is not a complementary, aesthetic attribute, but is a necessary and crucial one. In another tradition on mercy, he said, "He who does not show mercy to human beings will not receive God's Mercy".[55] He also said, 'Those who are merciful will receive God's Mercy; Have mercy on those who are on earth, and He who is in Heaven will have mercy on you.'"[56]

"It is worth noting, in this context, that the Prophet, pbuh, was keen on spreading mercy to the widest extent among people.

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[54] Reported by Boukhri, in the Section on *God has divided mercy into one hundred portions*, tradition 6000

[55] SaHiH Muslim, The Section on *his mercy, pbuh, towards boys, family and his modesty, and its merit*, Tradition No. 6030.

[56] Reported by Tirmidhi, The Section on *Mercy Towards Muslims*, Tradition No. 1924, and said that it is an authentic tradition. See also *the series of the Authentic Traditions*, v.2, p.925

He was not satisfied that his companions should show mercy merely to members of their family, relatives and close friends. Such mercy is commendable, but may be driven by other motives.

Thus, in connection with this concept of mercy, he says to his companions, "You shall not attain faith until you attain mutual mercy among yourselves." The companions said, "O, Messenger of God, all of us are merciful." He said, "Mercy is not merely a sentiment that you show to your friend, but is for all people."[57] This is a proper guidance that contributes to the propagation of mercy among people, and is shown to be a commendable attribute and a great human value.

He used to judge his companions according to the degree of mercy they have assimilated in themselves and considered it a great merit in them. Thus he said once, "The most merciful towards my people is Abu Bakr."[58] This is an indication of the value he attributed to it, by revealing to his companions his predilection of Abu Bakr.

3. The spontaneous, unpretentious practicing of Mercy by the Prophet, pbuh, in all matters of his life. Thus he once visited the grave of his mother, sat there and wept, while he was surrounded by his companions.[59]

Once, he visited, together with some of his companions, one of his companions, Saad bin Ubadah, who was sick. When he saw his condition, he wept.[60] Indeed, the Prophet of Mercy,

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[57] Reported by Al-Tabarani and classified as authentic. See *Al-Matjar Al-RabeH fii thawab Al-ámal Al-Saleh*, p. 779.
[58] An Authentic Tradition. See *the series of the Authentic Traditions, v.3, p.223.*
[59] SaHiH Muslim, the Section on the *Prophet's seeking God's permission to visit his mother's grave,*Tradition No. 2259.
[60] SaHiH Muslim, the Section on *Weeping on the dead,* Tradition No. 2137.

pbuh, was so sensitive that he would shun seeing certain situations, because his merciful soul could not bear them.

A close companion of his, Osamah bin Zaid, has reported that, "Once we visited the Prophet, pbuh, and one of his daughters sent a messenger to tell him that her son was dying. He told the messenger to tell her that to God returns what He has given and everything for Him had an appointed time and to tell her also to be patient and to resign herself to God. The messenger returned to the Prophet and told him that she adjured him to go to her."

He went on to say, "the Prophet, pbuh, went to her, together with Saad bin Ubadah, and I went with them. The Prophet, pbuh, lifted the boy who was in the agony of death and wept. At that, Saad said, 'What is this, O, Messenger of God?' The Prophet said, "This is the mercy that God has implanted in the souls of his servants, and God is merciful towards His merciful servants."[61]

The questioning by this companion, which indicates some surprise, shows that the prevailing culture of those days deplored weeping by great men, as this would not become them in the eyes of their people. So the Prophet, pbuh, took the opportunity to correct such concepts.

The Prophet found it difficult to be present at such event, because he was too merciful to bear such happening to the child, and out of his mercy towards his mother. But when he did come and saw the agony of death experienced by the child, he wept, while some of his companions were looking at him. Thus, he took the opportunity to indicate to them that such happening necessarily provokes weeping, which is a sign of

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[61] SaHiH Muslim, the Section on *Weeping over the dead*, Tradition No. 2135

mercy. The Merciful God rewards His merciful servants by being merciful to them.

When his son Ibrahim died, he wept. He also wept on many other occasions, while his companions were watching and wept with him, spontaneously and sincerely. It is a clear invitation by the Prophet, pbuh, to the indispensable positive interaction that is appropriate to the situations, and a warning against indifference, cruelty and stagnation.

Allow me to mention in this context two testimonies by senior Arab chiefs, who were the bitter enemies of the Prophet, pbuh. They had given this testimony before they embraced Islam. These were Abu Sufyan bin Harb and Urwah bin Masoud al-Thaqafi.

The former has said, "I have never seen any people loving any one like the love shown by the companions of Muhammad to Muhammad."[62]

Such love produces effects and fruits. The Prophet's companions were extremely keen on following on his footsteps: everything he said or did. They were extremely eager to emulate him, in all his attributes, and I believe that the attribute of mercy was in the forefront thereof.

"He warned his companions against rigid hearts and strongly admonished those who shun mercy, regardless of his position or status.

Once Al-Aqra'bin Habis, a leader of the tribe of Bani Tamim and a well-known personality at the time, came to the Prophet,

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[62] See Ibn Hisham *The Biography of the Prophet,* v.3, p.245, *Tabaqat bin Saad*, v.2, p.56

pbuh, on some business. At that moment the Prophet, pbuh, was holding a child and kissing him. Al-Aqra'was surprised to see this and it seemed that he had expressed disapproval and said to the Prophet, "Do you kiss your children? I have ten children and I have never kissed any one of them."

The Prophet, pbuh, gave him a rebuking look and said, "He who is not merciful will not be shown any mercy. What can I do to you if God has lifted mercy from your heart!"[63]

It seems that Al-Aqra' was under the impression that kissing and entertaining children is not consistent with leadership and greatness. It was this that made him disapprove of the action of the Prophet, pbuh. He was perhaps particularly disapproving because the Prophet, pbuh, did that in his presence, as though the gathering of senior persons is no place for the kissing of a child.

The Prophet, pbuh, wanted to teach Al-Aqra'a a lesson from which those present would benefit and those it would reach rapidly: Greatness lies in simplicity and is manifested in the practice of mercy.

Following is another scene that reflects mercy in its most beautiful aspects. The Prophet, pbuh, used to line up his cousins, the sons of his uncle Al-Abbas: Abdullah, Obeidallah and Kathir, and ask them to race and to tell them: "He who arrives first I shall reward him with so and so." So they race towards him and fall on his back and chest, and he would hug and kiss them.[64]

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[63] Reported by Bukhari, *Book of Manners*, Tradition 5967.
[64] Reported by Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad*, on acceptable authority.

You can imagine, dear audience, a man towards whom three children rush and attempt to beat each other at reaching him first and win the promised reward.. It is a scene that abounds in mercy, spontaneity and casualty.

This scene reminds me of how leaders attempt to endear themselves to their electorate on official occasions or in election seasons by showing affection to children and kissing them. They do this because they realize that such gestures draw a bright picture of them and endears them to the electorate.

However, the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, used to make such gestures in his words and deeds 1400 years ago, in sheer spontaneity and sincere intention.

The Prophet, pbuh, has sought to implant the attribute of mercy in people because it is one of God's beautiful attributes and not for any other motive. Among the methods he used in this respect was to urge people to practice mercy towards other creatures, so that mercy would be deeply rooted in them and spontaneously practiced in their dealing with one another.

One of his close companions, Abdullah bin Masoud, has reported the following episode: "While in travel, the Prophet withdrew from us to answer the call of nature. During his absence, we saw a bird with two chicks, which we took. The mother approached us and spread its wings, as though requesting that we return her chicks to her. When the Prophet, pbuh, saw this, he said, "Who has agonized this bird by taking away its chicks? Give them back to it.

Further in the way, he discovered that we had burnt a multitude of ants and asked who had done that. We said that

we were the ones who had done that. So he said, “It is only the Lord of fire who torments in fire.”[65]

The Prophet, pbuh, told his companions two stories in this respect. One is reported by his companion Abu Hurairah, which goes: “A man was walking in a lonely place and felt thirsty. He found a well, went down it, drank his fill and when he went up, he saw a dog panting and searching in the sand for water with which to quench his thirst. So the man said to himself, ‘this dog is just as thirsty as I was. So he went down the well, filled his slipper with water and gave the dog to drink. God appreciated this deed and forgave him his sins.’ The companions said, ‘Shall we be rewarded for caring for animals?’ He said, ‘You will be rewarded for each animal you care for.’”[66]

In a similar story, he warned against cruelty to animals. Thus he said, “A woman was tormented on account of a cat, which she locked up till it died. The woman was punished in Hell, for she neither gave it anything to eat or to drink, and locked it up, nor did he let her look for something to eat in the open.”[67]

The Prophet, pbuh, has repeatedly made such points, narrated such stories and performed such practices because they are sure to penetrate deeply into people’s souls and prompt them to establish self-discipline in matters of nurturing such attribute of mercy, which attribute every one on earth needs. It was as though his first and foremost concern was to spread mercy and make sure it is put into practice, so that it would become a social trait and a social landmark that governs social

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[65] Reported by Abu Dawood, the Section on *Burning the Enemy with Fire*, tradition 2675, (authentic). See also Al-Albani, T*he Series of Authentic Traditions*, v.1, p.487,

[66] Reported by Bukhari, in the Section on *People’s Mercy towards Animals*, Tradition No. 6009.

[67] Reported by Bukhari, the Section on *The Recompense of Giving Water to Drink*

relations and contributes to the solving or narrowing of problems.

Thus the Prophet, pbuh, was keen on firmly establishing, in the minds of his followers and those who appreciate virtues, the love and perpetuation of mercy at all times and in all cases, without strings attached to mundane or temporary motives, such as those sociologists talk about.

This kind of education creates an inner feeling among the followers of the Prophet, pbuh; that mercy is its own reward and is, sooner or later, needed for its beneficial effects. Thus, a Muslim would treat any animal, such as a dog, mercifully, and if he has a cat he does not make it suffer but would be kind to it, and if he comes across a tiny little bird, he would have pity on it and handles it mercifully.

The Prophet, pbuh, was always merciful towards the weak and unprivileged such as servants. He urged that they be not given too much work or too difficult work and not to be treated cruelly. Thus, his servant, Anas, has reported that the Prophet had never been harsh towards any servant.

The Prophet, pbuh, has urged that this category of people be treated mercifully. In this respect, he said, “They are your brethren and have been entrusted to you. Give them to eat what you eat, and clothes such as you wear, and do not set harsh tasks to them and in such cases give them a hand.[68]

I see a merciful touch in the Prophet, pbuh, in his teaching, which is a matter that seems of minor importance, but which is highly significant. Thus Abu Hurairah reports that the Prophet, pbuh, said, “If a servant cooks some food for one of you and

[68] Reported by Muslim, the Section on *Feeding Servants,* tradition 4315.

he brings it while it is still hot and steaming, then let him share the food with him, and if the amount of the food is not quite enough, then let him give his servant a little of such food.[69]

I cannot help feeling, dear audience, that this is a superior instruction that implants mercy quietly and gracefully in people's souls. Just imagine his urging people to sit with their servants and eat with them the food the servants have cooked, and if this is not possible, for some reason or another, the master of the house should give the servant some of this food, prompted by considerations of mercy and kindness towards the servant.

Hearts that are sensitive and souls that are pure realize that mercy is a must, as a result of the statements they heard and the events they witnessed in which the Prophet, pbuh, was involved, and through their being ordered to follow on the footsteps of the Prophet and try to emulate him. Moreover, he was not content with the admiration shown by his followers or their surprise at his mercy in words and deeds, and his inviting them to adhere to mercy, while some of them remained unaffected by his teachings, as in the case of some previous great figures and reformers.

The Prophet, pbuh, was keen on seeing his followers practice mercy in words and deeds and urged them to assimilate it by various means. This prompts us to say that among the signs of the Prophet's mercy towards people is his teaching of mercy to them and helping them to practice it and urging them to put it into practice in their daily affairs.

This is exemplified by his statement to his companions, "He who has enough food for two persons should invite a third one

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[69] Reported by Muslim, the Section on *Feeding Servants, tra*dition 43147

to share his food, and if the food is enough for four persons then he should share it with five or six persons." In obedience, the companions used to invite one another and dine together.[70]

This is a magnificent lesson in mutual solidarity and mercy, applied by the Prophet, pbuh, and offered to all humanity. I wonder if contemporary humanity applied this advice, would we read in the 2005 Report on Human Development that more than 850 million people, one third of whom are pre-school children, are victims of the horrendous circle of malnutrition and its complications.[71] I leave it to humanity itself to answer the question.

This was, rightly so, that has distinguished the message of the Prophet, pbuh, from other great figures that preceded him. Thus Christ, pbuh, has preached mercy and tolerance, but was not able to establish a community wherein mutual mercy prevailed, as evidenced by the fact that he himself has suffered much at the hands of his community and was not well treated. Professor Enine Rene has pointed this out, "Christ, pbuh, has called for peace, equality and brotherhood, while Prophet Muhammad has succeeded in *establishing* equality among believers during his life.[72]

This is a clear sign to the difference between those who advocate ethics but fail to implant it in the souls of people, and those who prach them and whose plan was to make ethics actually practiced in daily life,

I would also like to point out to an important matter that is related to these two noble Prophets. Thus Christ was unable to

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70 Reported by Bukhari, in the Section on *Guests and Family*, tradition 602.
71 Muhammad Sadeq Makki, *Figures that Recount the World*, first impression, 2006, Dar Al-Bayan, Riyadh.
72 Enine Rene, *Rays Emanating from the Light of Islam*, p.323.

apply what he was advocating, because he lacked authority, which, in his time, was in the hands of the Jews and the Romans, whose attitude to him is well known. This was not his fault and he is not to blame. He was succeeded by his Prophet brother Muhammad, pbuh, to realize what Christ had hoped to achieve.

As to the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, he has sought to obtain what Christ was unable to get, namely, the force necessary to protect what he was preaching. This prompts us to say that the power acquired by the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, and the wars he fought – all this was in order to protect the virtues he was preaching, which I promise to deal with in one of my forthcoming lectures.

The power I refer to was practiced as a mercy to the mercy we are talking about. I hope I will not be accused of philosophizing matters; however, I intended, by that, to clarify two matters, the invoking of which is quite in order when talking about Christ and the Prophet of Mercy, peace be upon them.

Dear Audience,

We have already indicated that the Prophet of Mercy had laid down the foundations and characteristics of the attributes of mercy, which made it an integral part of every legitimate action, and an indispensable feature of every conduct and behavior.

The Prophet of Mercy has sought to spread the ethical way of life that would contribute to the constitution of a sound person and establishment of an ideal society. This way of life involves the cultivation of the art of control of one’s whims and desires and the realization of positive values. This means, in practice,

avoiding all the evil that is enjoined against, and the practicing of good that is enjoined to be done.[73] The story of the man who went to Paradise, on account of a dog, and the story of the woman who went to hell on account of a cat, are not far behind.

It would seem to me that this would lead to the establishment of the balance and integration which the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, was aspiring to achieve as he guided his followers and urged them to carry out their religious duties and achieve the objectives they were seeking to achieve in emulation of him, in light of the aforementioned way of life, in the forefront of which is the attribute of mercy.

The Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, has taught his followers that the legitimacy of the end does not mean a legitimacy of the means. For a proposed action to be acceptable, it is not enough that it has a benevolent objective; it must also be consistent with legitimacy in the sense that it should be an acceptable enterprise and should be consistent with its rules[74], the most prominent of which, mercy, which is almost non-existent in that environment.

I can assure you, dear audience, that I have investigated a great many deeds and accomplishments of several figures, who include war chiefs, leaders and pioneers of liberation movements, throughout history, but I found none who embodied such balance, throughout his life journey, both towards his followers and towards his enemies. The Prophet, pbuh, was unique in this respect.

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[73] See Dr. Draz, *The Constitution of Ethics*, pp.611-612, with some adaptation and addition.

[74] *Ibid.,p.615,* with some adaptation.

Meanwhile, Dr.Adam noticed that some members of the audience were looking at one another and that some of them had stopped taking notes. So she stopped talking and looked at them with a smile on her face. One of them said, “Communication between us has almost been interrupted, as it seems to me that some of us did not quite grasp what was said during the last minutes.”

She thanked them for their remark, which was a sign that they were following and absorbing what she was talking about. She said that what they had mentioned was to be expected, as it was akin to rules, particularly in view of the fact that they were not accompanied by exemplification, which she would offer immediately. Then she smiled and said that this was the habit of students, who do not wait till the lecturer finishes his lecture and would most probably deal with what they on their minds, in terms of problems and queries. However, it was their very nature which prevailed, though some of the audience were not students in fact, but were professors and that in fact it was a source of great appreciation to find that the audience comprised an elite who made her feel embarrassed as she felt as though she was being tested and would be criticized. But she asked them for mercy, the kind of mercy that would certainly make her feel reassured.

“Dear Audience,

I shall clarify what has been mentioned in brief by stating some events and occurrences which were mentioned by scores of books. I would by the way like to mention that legends are most repugnant to me. Unfortunately, one comes across legends in the biographies of ancient great figures, particularly those about whose life not much is known. This has prompted their followers to invent stories and concoct legends and anecdotes about them, prompted to do so by their imagining

that greatness means the departure from what people are used to, and that a saint will not be so considered unless he produces miracles which no other human being can produce.

Such people did not realize that humanity is not affected by any legend whatsoever, because legends do not contribute to their education, despite the fact that they may draw their attention or they may accept them for a while, though knowing that they are mere legends. They may probably think a lot of them, or more precisely, marvel at them.

I apologize, dear audience, for this digression, which I promise not to abandon, but I promise to apologize to you whenever I feel that I have digressed in my talk, if I so remember or if reminded, and shall revert to what we are talking about.

You must all have heard of great leaders and chiefs, such as Alexander the Macedonian, Napoleon and Hitler. History tells us that they were greatly admired by their followers, and each one of them was able to gather round him great multitudes of admirers and history tells us that they have exploited these multitudes because they that admired and followed them, and that they have used them in order to serve their own ends irrespective of the dangers that surround them or the damage they would suffer from.

No one needs to be reminded of what Hitler or Napoleon, who are well known for taking advantage of their soldiers. This has been documented by those who studied their personalities and examined the battles they had waged. One of them is Colonel Muhammad Asadallah Safa, who said, “Napoleon used to give

attention to the interests of his soldiers, but he used to exploit them in the cruelest manner.’””[75]

No fair person would doubt that the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, was loved by all his followers, who gave him their absolute trust, which was not the case for a great many leaders. Thus a leader may be loved but is not trusted for other considerations, and vice-versa. Thus the soldiers may trust their leader and his capabilities, but they do not necessarily love him, for obvious reasons.

The events that have been recorded confirm that the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, was not of this type at all. History has not recorded a single instance evidencing that he has taken advantage of this love and relied on this trust for taking his followers wherever he wanted and for realizing his aspirations through them, without taking account of the ethical considerations, that are headed by mercy, as it is this attribute that is needed by followers from the leader they follow, an attribute which they may not need any other in many cases.

The Prophet, pbuh, used to preach this faith with absolute tenderness and mercy, so that he would not burden his followers with what they do not bear. Indeed, in some cases, he used to advise those who come to follow him and stay with him, to go back to their folks, lest they should be harmed, out of mercy and pity for them.

Take the case of Amr bin Absah Al-Sulami, who came to the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, at the beginning of the mission and announced his conversion to Islam. He then proposed to the Prophet to stay with and support him, but the Prophet, out of

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[75] Colonel Muhammad Safa, *Napoleon Bonaparte*, first impression, 1988, Dar Al-Nafaes.

mercy for him and by way of sparing him any burden, said to him, “You are not capable of doing this at present; don’t you see my difficult position and the attitude of the people to my message? So, go back to your folks, and when you hear that I have triumphed, come to me.”[76]

It was mercy that made the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, give priority to the interest of the man over others, when he told him not to expose himself to harm. I do hope that the preachers and leaders of movements in our contemporary world would assimilate this lesson and refrain from pushing their followers to destruction, while they are safe far away.

This mercy has given fruit, for this man did not forget the Prophet’s care and mercy for him. So, when the Prophet migrated to Medina and succeeded in establishing a state, that man came to him, saying, “Do you recognize me?” The Prophet replied, “Yes, you are the man who came to me in Mecca.”[77]

The Prophet needed this man, as his followers were few, but he had mercy for him because he was a lonely stranger and the Prophet had feared that he might suffer harm. So he said to him, “You are not capable of doing this at present; don’t you see my difficult position and the attitude of the people to my message? So, go back to your folks, and when you hear that I have triumphed, come to me.”

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[76] See SaHih Muslim, the Section on *The Conversion of Amr bin Absah to Islam*, tradition 1930; AlSalabi, *The Biography of the Prophet*: *Lessons & Examples*, v.1, p.277.
[77] See SaHih Muslim, the Section on *The Conversion of Amr bin Absah to Islam*, tradition 1930.

The Prophet's mercy towards this sincere man had been given priority over the Prophet's interest in keeping him for assistance in his propagation of his message.

Anyone who has read the story of Ammar bin Yasser, whose mother was the first one to die as a martyr for the sake of her faith, and whose father was to follow suit after being exposed to great suffering at the hands of the Quraish pagans.

The Quraish pagans used to take this youth and inflict on him severe suffering, to the point of his losing the ability to distinguish what he was saying. Once they ordered him to curse the Prophet, pbuh, if he wanted them to stop torturing him, and he did so. Then he came to the Prophet, pbuh, full of sadness. On seeing his plight, the Prophet was very sad and asked Ammar about his condition, and Ammar told him that the infidel Qurashites seized torturing him only after he maligned the Prophet and said good things about their gods. The Prophet, pbuh, asked him about what was in his heart, and he replied that it was full of faith, upon which the Prophet told him to say again what the pagans want him to say if they reverted to torturing him.[78]

The mercy of the Prophet towards his companions was such as to permit him to malign his person in order to save himself from the torture of the infidels. Not only that, but he also gave him open permission to do that again, if need be. It was as if he told him that if he was given the choice to malign the Prophet or to be tortured then he should opt for maligning him and not worry. It would seem to me that when the Prophet, pbuh, was talking to Ammar, he had painfully remembered Ammar's mother, who was killed by Quraish infidels, and his

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[78] Ibn Al-Jawzi, *Zaad al-Masiir*, v.4, p.495; and Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Fiqh al-Siira,* fourth impression, 1989, Dar Al-Qalam, Damascus.

father, who died of torture. Hence, the Prophet's heart felt pity for him and showed this intensive mercy to him.

I leave it to you, dear audience, to imagine the intensity of this mercy which the Prophet, pbuh, has felt towards Ammar.

On another occasion, a youth was prompted by his love to the Prophet and the intensity of his faith in what the Prophet was preaching, to ask permission to join him in his fight against his enemies, although he felt that his parents did not want him to do so when he left them. Let us, dear audience, listen to the story of this youth.

Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-Aas has reported that a man came to the Prophet, pbuh, and said, "O, Messenger of God, I have come in order to fight on your side, for the sake of God and the Hereafter, and I have come leaving my parents weeping." The Prophet said, 'Go back to them and make them laugh as you have made them weep'".[79]

This story contrasts with the agony of thousands of women today and with their cries as they see their children being driven to battles, without their knowledge or advice. Many are the scenes, which we daily see on television, of mothers who had lost their sons and carry their pictures, either because they were killed or taken prisoner or are missing. Unfortunately, there is no one to listen to them or wipe their tears or sympathize with them. There is hardly any country at war that is devoid of such sorrowful scenes or the societies of mothers who have lost their sons and ask for mercy, but to no avail.

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[79] Reported by Ibn Majah, in the Section on *A Man Fighting Contrary to the Will of His Parents,* authentic tradition No. 2782. See *The Series of Authentic Traditions*, v.2, p.387.

The mercy of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, did not tolerate the ignoring by the youth of the weeping of his parents. So he ordered him to return to them and restore the smile to their faces. You may perhaps agree with me that today's mothers wish to have a leader who is characterized by such attributes of mercy as those of the Prophet, pbuh, and be a father to his soldiers and a brother to their mothers.

Dr. Adam paused for a while. Then she asked the audience if there was anyone among them who would say that such episodes are rare and apply to those persons only, and do not represent a general way of life. Seven or eight persons raised their hands.

She said, "This is a legitimate question, which has been on my mind for several days, but which was soon dissipated after I came across similar episodes, some of which I shall put before you. By the way, I suggest that some of you search in the sources that deal with the life of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, and see if similar episodes and incidents may be found. In any case, this is an optional matter, as I realize that many of you have other obligations and commitments.

To revert to our subject, I can say that mercy was never absent in the situations of the Prophet, pbuh, and anyone who investigates his life will not fail to see mercy inherent in these circumstances, whatever they may be.

When the torturing of weak Muslims escalated to unbearable proportions in Mecca, the Prophet's merciful heart prompted him to tell them to migrate to Abyssinia and encouraged them to do so, saying, "In it there is a king who does not permit any

wrong to be inflicted on any person"[80] upon which many of them migrated and found therein peace and security. This episode is reported by Um Salamah, who was among the first Muslims, and later became a wife of the Prophet, pbuh, and a mother of believers. Said she, "When Mecca closed tightly upon us, and the Prophet's companions were exposed to unbearable torturing on account of their faith, at a time when the Prophet, pbuh, could not protect them, though he himself was under the protection of his own family and uncles and was immune to the hated suffering afflicting his companions.

The Messenger of God, pbuh, told them that there was in Abyssinia a king who did not permit any wrong to be inflicted on anybody; so he told them to go to his country, until God would ordain a solution for their plight. So, to it we went and there we were gathered and stayed in the best of abodes and the best of neighbors, fearing no wrong to befall us."[81]

You are certainly aware, dear audience, that in this episode the mercy and pity for those were what prompted the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, to ask them to leave Mecca and head to Abyssinia, despite his need for them and his desire that they stay with him.

Dear Audience,

I am thinking of the events of the journey for the performance of *Umrah* (the small pilgrimage) in which the Prophet, pbuh, headed, in the sixth year of the Hegira, together with his companions, to Mecca Al-Mukarrmah, for the performance of *Umrah.*

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[80] Ibn Hisham, *The Biography of the Prophet, v.1, p.413*, and Dr. Akram Al-Omary, *The Authentic Biography of the Prophet*, v.1, p.170.
[81] Abdul Malek Hisham, *The Biography of the Prophet*, v.1, p.397, Dar Al-Fikr.

In this episode, the Prophet, pbuh, was keen that some neighboring tribes accompany him in order to avoid any confrontation with Quraish, but those tribes declined from accompanying him.

The Prophet, pbuh, received news that Quraish had come to know of his approaching them and that they were preparing to confront him. In order to avoid clashing with Quraish[46], he changed course, preferring a tortuous and tiring road to confronting his enemies in warfare, out of mercy to both sides.

He has made this clear to the Khuzaah delegation, who acted as mediators between him and Quraish, saying, "Quraish has incurred a lot of harm on account of the continuing war, and I propose a truce to them." Such proposal is an indication of his hatred of war, though he was able to wage it; but mercy requires the sparing of bloodshed.

Moreover, he did not confine himself to this mediation, but sent one of his best companions, Othman ibn Affaan, to assure Quraish that the Messenger had come only as a visitor to, and venerator of, the Sacred House and that he was not seeking war or confrontation.

The Prophet, pbuh, adhered to this peaceful path, even when news reached him that Quraish had killed his messenger, Othman. This turned out to be untrue; but he and his companions were terribly angry; so they pledged to offer their lives, if it became necessary to confront Quraish. However, he kept the door open and said in this respect, "By Him in whose

Hand is my soul, I shall be amenable to any plan that involves the veneration of God's Sanctuaries.[82]

The Prophet, bpuh, agreed to the unfair conditions of Quraish, which made his companions angry. But they were so only on the surface. They provided that the Prophet and his companions shall return that year, and, among other unfair conditions, they crossed out from the Peace Accord the phrase "Muhammad, the Messenger of God".

This attitude on the part of the Prophet involved giving priority to public interests over leaders' desires and personal aims.

The Prophet, pbuh, was advocating mercy to the country and its potentials, which are for all sides, as though he was saying, "I shall accept forthwith any proposal aiming at preserving the Kaaba and Mecca."

This proposal we send to many countries. We are daily informed of their news of perpetual fighting, which destroys possessions and all that is sacred . This means that all sides are losers.

But the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, wanted all sides to be winners and the land to be safe.

Never had it occurred in the history of the Prophet's preaching, which had been going on for nearly twenty years, that the companions expressed discontent before him, implying objecting to him, which was not their intention to do so, and was a totally unprecedented occurrence.

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[82] Reported by Bukhari, in the Section on *Conditions in Jihad and Conciliation*, tradition 2731

Dear audience,

It never occurred to me that the Prophet, pbuh, would solve this problem and overcome this dilemma, only with mercy and supplication for mercy.

You have the right to ask how this was effected. After the Peace Accord had been concluded, the Prophet told his followers to sacrifice their garlanded offerings and shave their heads so that they may end their state of *ihram*. But none of them made any move because of their disappointment and frustration, even after he had repeated his order three times.

Then the Prophet entered the quarters of his wife Um Salamah and told her what had happened. She said that their feeling of dissatisfaction was understandable and she suggested that he sacrifice his own garlanded offerings and shave his head, which he did and went out to them and said, "God will be merciful to those who shave their heads, repeating that three times, upon which they stood up and sacrificed their garlanded offerings and started shaving one another's head, to the point that they almost killed one another in frustration.

I have dwelt too long on these occurrences, which, in fact, are not narrated for their own sake, and I do not wish to dwell on analysis and comments on them. I leave this to you own intelligence, which will not fail to see in these occurrences the phenomenon of mercy clearly exemplified together with his keenness on invoking and spreading it, from the time he left his house until he concluded peace with Quraish and overcame the dilemma with his companions, despite the many obstacles they faced and the series of provocations they were exposed to, which I have chosen not to elaborate on.

But allow me to say, “Had the Prophet yielded to his companions and exploited their enthusiasm and their pledge of allegiance to the point of death; had he made use of all this and insisted on entering Mecca, and had Quraish stood by their refusal, then fighting would have broken between them, the consequences of which would have been disastrous, and hundreds on both sides would have been killed, as the situation had been too tense and the challenge on both sides had reached great proportions.

But nothing of the sort did happen, because the Prophet’s mercy has controlled, directed and dominated every event, even at the expense of the embarrassment of the Prophet both in relation to his followers and to his enemies.

He has endured a great deal, as witness the sequence of events, but he did not change or abandon the attitude of mercy that was clearly manifest towards both sides. Thus the consequence of the peace accord was that war was to stop for years and both sides exchanged visits of their relatives and scores of infidels adopted Islam.Could we not, therefore, say that the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, has fought his adversaries with mercy and guided his followers with that same mercy?

I remember in this context a statement, which I have recorded, made by the Spanish scholar Jean Lake, who said, “The life of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, is best described by what God has said, ‘*We sent thee not, but as a Mercy to all creatures,’* (Al-Anbiyaa’, 107). The Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, was a true mercy and I send blessings on him in great earnestness and devotion.[83]

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[83] Al-Husseini Maaddi, *The Messenger in Western Fair Eyes*, p.88

Then Dr. Adam thanked the audience and said she would resume her talks and bade them good-bye.

Fifth Lecture
Mercy Comes First

This is Dr. Adam's Fifth Lecture, which we are following and recording. She will continue, as she intimated, her talks on the aspects of the mercy of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, towards his companions.

"Dear audience, I welcome you all and thank you for coming." Dr. Adam began her lecture with these words and went on to say,

" If the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, did not take advantage of his companions in such a manner as to burden them with what they could not bear; more clearly, if he did not consider them as fuel for the battle, or a means to achieve certain ends, by way of mercy to them, as we have seen. This is because, for him, *they were the battle* for whom he was fighting, and not a fuel for the battle, nor had they ever been a tool to be taken advantage of by him, in the sense of the negative effects we see in the biography of great leader.

If this was the case, and it *was* in fact the cse, then this means that he was keen on making things easy for them and on being merciful to them, in all their daily affairs, despite his certainty of the great love of him by his companions and their strong determination to obey him and emulate all that issued from him, whether in sayings or deeds.

He has made mercy in all its aspects a prominent characteristic in all the affairs of their life, whether in respect to their

relations with their Almighty God, with the Prophet, pbuh, or to their relations with one another, or even with their non-Muslim relatives.

The first manifestations of mercy are the advocating and embellishment of it, through perpetually explicit statements, to the end that it would become implanted in their souls at all times, as a safety belt, not to be bypassed or ignored.

It may not be possible to quote all the relevant statements, but we shall provide mere samples in this context. We begin with the Quranic verse, *"God intends every facility for you. He does not want to put you to difficulties."* (Al-Baqarah,185). The confirming of facility and the negation of difficulty are among the most evident manifestations of mercy.

Another relevant verse is, *"He has imposed no difficulties on you in religion"* (Al-Hajj, 78). What mercy is greater and more manifest than that which leads to the lifting of difficulties and hardship from the path of the followers of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, and the ease granted by God Almighty is a manifest mercy: "*God doth wish to lighten (your burdens)"* (Al-Nisaa', 28), whatever such lightening may be or of whatever form.

God Almighty has informed the believers, and the Prophet before them, that their Prophet is most kind and merciful, in his description of him: *"Now hath come to you a Messenger from amongst yourselves . It grieves him that ye should suffer, ardently anxious is he over you: to the believers is he full of compassion (ra'uufun) and merciful (raHiim)."* (Al-Tawbah, 128).

I have looked into what the exegesists have said about the meaning of the above verse and the distinction between "*ra'*

uufun" and "*raHiim*" and discovered something very beautiful, which I propose to summarize for you. Some scholars have said that "*ra'fah"* (from which "*ra'uufun"* is derived) is the protection from harm, while "*raHmah"* (from which "*raHiim*" is derived) is the embellishment of the soul with all that is good and beneficial.

Some have said that the difference between "*ra'fah"* and "*raHmah*" is an intensification of mercy, a special mercy that drives away what is harmful, as in the verse, "*Let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by God.*" (Al-Nuur, 2); while "*raHmah*" is a more comprehensive term. It includes the foregoing meaning and involves, as well, the provision of bounties and boons.[84]

God Almighty has combined for the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, these two attributes in this manner in order to clearly reveal the great wisdom for the sake of which He has attributed to the Prophet, pbuh, these two qualities. Such attributes create in the souls of his followers security and reassurance and make them realize that they follow him whom God has made compassionate and merciful and whose conduct is subject to these two attributes which protect them from harm and hardship and bring to them security, goodness and happiness.

The Prophet, pbuh, was aware of the implications of this description and said expressly to his companions; "I am in fact a mercy granted to all creatures.[85] I find that the word "granted" in this tradition makes one feel the beauty of mercy and humanity's need for it, as though it was something given

[84] See Abul Baqaa'Al-Kafwi, *Al-Kulliyyat: mu'jam fii al-mustalaHaat wal furuuq al-lughawiyyah*, v.1, p.471, edited by Adnan Darwiish and Muhammad Al-Masri, Al-Risalat Foundation, Beirut.

[85] Reported by Al-Hakem in *Al-Mustadrak*, v.1, p.91, and by Al-Dirami in *Al-Lisan*, v.1., p.21, and admitted by Al-Albani in *SaHih Al-Jame*', v.1, p.411.

as a gift given by a person to his beloved ones. This is because God loves His creatures. Therefore, He sent them as a gift: Prophet Muhammad, who was aware of this great bounty and was keen on the application and practicing thereof. The Prophet confirms this description in another tradition: "I am in fact sent as a mercy."[86]

The two aforementioned authentic traditions indicate that there is a close connection between mercy in all its manifestations and the person of the Prophet, pbuh. Hence, it is not conceivable that any of his sayings or deeds do not reflect mercy as a most prominent characteristic of his qualities.

It is proper to point out in this context that this mercy, in all its manifestations and forms, is not confined to this group of believers who surrounded the Prophet, pbuh, for it may be surmised that he has singled them out with this very special position for obvious reasons that are imposed by companionship, common life and his intention of keeping them and taking advantage of them, and so on.

This is by no means the case. For all the mercy conferred on his companions was applicable to those who came after them. This is confirmed by sayings, guidance and deeds. Thus, it happened once that some have asked the Prophet, pbuh, about this very matter, and his question was a blessing, because the reply came as good tidings.

Thus, one of the companions of the Prophet, pbuh, has stolen a kiss from a woman and told the Prophet about that. So a revelation was sent, "*And establish prayer at the two ends of the day, and at the approaches of the night, for those things*

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[86] Reported by Musli, in the Section on *The Prohibition of the cursing of animals and others*, tradition 6613.

that are good remove those that are evil. This is a reminder for the mindful." Hud, 114). So, the man said, "O, Messenger of God, does this apply to me?", to which the Prophet replied , ""It is to all my people."[87]

In this statement, which is all mercy, the Prophet, pbuh, confirms that his pity towards his followers over the future hundreds of years is no less than his pity and mercy for those who lived with him and saw him morning and evening.

Dear audience,

In my readings, and research, I have collected a number of rules or features that show how mercy imposes itself on the duties and affect them directly, as will be shown by surveying these manifestations.[88]

1. Mercy exempts a person totally from (religious) duties. Thus the duty of *Jihad* (Holy War) does not apply to those who have good reasons for not participating therein, such as the sick, the blind, and the lame. This provision appears in God's ordinance, "*No blame is there on the blind, nor is there blamd on the lame, nor one ill* (if they do not participate in *jihad*) "\ (Al-FatH, 17).

Similarly, those who cannot perform it for physical or financial reasons are exempted from performing same, as indicated in the verse: *"Pilgrimage is a duty men owe to God, those who can afford the journey."* (Al-Imran. 97). Moreover, the provision of interdiction lapses in case of necessity.

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[87] Reported by Bujhari, the Section on *Prayer is an atonement*, tradition No.526.
[88] See Dr. Daraz, *The Constitution of Ethics in the Qur'an*, p.80 ff.

Thus, a person who finds nothing but the prohibited food and the prohibited drink, and may be exposed to destruction if he does not partake of it, may eat and drink of it. The relevant verse in the Qur'an reads as follows: *"But if any is forced by hunger with no inclination to transgression, God is indeed oft-forgiving, most merciful.*" (Al-Ma'idah, 3.) It is mercy that is behind such provisions.

2. Mercy exempts a portion of the duties, such as the shortening of prayer for travelers, where a four-cycle prayer is shortened to two-cycles: *"When you travel through the earth, there is no blame on you if you shorten your prayers for fear the unbelievers may attack you.*" (Al-Nisaa', 101).

In connection with this verse, Exegesists have pointed out to a kind gesture that relates to our subject matter. I had intended to mention it to you, but I changed my mind at the last moment, in the hope you would dig it out yourselves from books of exegesis and I hope to hear from you in the next lecture, together with the examples I proposed that you look for in the previous lecture. In fact, I have not forgotten the subject, but I wanted to give you an opportunity to look for them.

3. Mercy dictates that this duty be postponed till an appropriate time for the person involved, such as fasting for the sick and traveler, as fasting involves a hardship for these two categories. In such case God's mercy permits such persons to postpone fasting until the causes that make the performance of the duty difficult have been removed.

4. Under mercy a difficult duty is substituted by an easy one. Thus travelers who do not find water for ablution, and the sick who cannot use water for health reasons, have been permitted to use *tayammum* (rubbing one's arms with sand), as indicated in the following verse: "*And if ye find no water then*

take for yourselves clean sand or earth and rub therewith your faces and hands. God doth not wish to place you in a difficulty, but to make you clean,m and complete His favor to you, that ye may be grateful."(Al-Ma'idah, 6).

Similarly, in the case of fasting. A person who is supposed to fast but is not able to do so, either because he is too old or because of chronic illness, such a person can feed one poor person for each day of fasting. God has said, "*(The prescribed number of days of fasting should be made up) from days later for those who can do it, is a ransom, the feeding of one that is indigent.*" (Al-Baqarah, 184)

The mercy involved in those categories is manifest; indeed, we believe that mercy was inherent in all those provisions, which make men pleased withal.

Dear audience,

I would like to quote and stress a matter in this context that is connected with some aspects of these lectures. It seems to be academic and specialized more than being cultural and common. But I assure you that this is not intended for its own sake.

The fact is that it is necessary to indicate that the mercy shown by the Prophet is an integral edifice that also has its own foundations, and manifestations, the factors of whose survival being inherent therein, and entices people in every place and at every time to turn thereto. This is unlike the manifestations of mercy that were associated with some great figures, which was no more than a passing word, a temporary attitude or a personal conduct that is not capable of survival and does not contribute to the building of a human civilization.

It is worth indicating here that the Prophet, pbuh, was not satisfied with proclaiming these provisions to his companions, but was also keen on promoting them in his words, as when he was asked by his companions in respect of one of the licenses in the performance of worship and he said, “It is a charity which He has bestowed on you; so, accept His charity”, and in his deeds, when he was traveling with his companions during the month of Ramadan. Thus he asked for some water and raised it upwards with his hands so that people can see him and drank thereof[89]. It was as though the aim was to train men and imbue them with mercy to the point of its becoming second nature in them.

This method, which the Prophet, pbuh, has used has emanated from his intense mercy to his companions and those who would come after them, the purpose being to teach them not to be too harsh on themselves and think that refraining from implementing such licenses was better. This has prompted the Prophet, pbuh, not to confine himself to words, but to exemplify the provision in different methods, and sometimes in anger. He went on to say in reproach of whoever does not benefit from that blessing which was granted to them as a gift from the Merciful God through His Prophet, who is also a donated gift. Hence Mercy donates nothing but mercy, and it is a mercy if we rest for a while.

Welcome, dear audience. I would like, in the second half of this lecture, to admit that I am greatly very pleased with your coming. I was afraid your number would diminish after several lectures, particularly the number of those who do not I intend to to submit the attendance certificate that is given to them for submission to an academic institution, for benefiting

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[89] Reported by Bukhari, Section on *Fasting in travel and breaking of one’s fasting*, tradition 1944>

therefrom. I thank you most heartily and hope that this mutual trust and confidence will continue and intensify between us, because it is a rare and precious thing, particularly at a time when many are afflicted by a crisis of trust in may areas.

Dear audience:

We are still talking on the manifestations of the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, towards his contemporary companions and those who come hundreds of years later.

But before I begin, I would like to give the opportunity to those who wish to present the examples which I proposed that you bring in the previous lecture, on the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, towards his companions.

One of the audience raised his hand. He was sitting on a mobile chair. Dr. Adam smiled and listened to him intensely. He said, "I have read about an anecdote in which the Prophet, pbuh, saw an old man who was walking with difficulty and leaning on his two sons. The Prophet asked what was wrong with the old man, and he was told that the old man had vowed to go on pilgrimage on foot. The Prophet expressed dissatisfaction with this and said that God has no interest in the old man's torturing of himself, and ordered him to mount.[90]

Dr. Adam thanked the speaker and said, "I suggest that we vote on the examples we hear by raising hands", and the audience agreed. She invited those who approve the inclusion of this anecdote in the examples and the majority of the audience raised their hands in approval.

[90] An authentic tradition reported by Ibn Maja, the Section on *those who vow to go on pilgrimage on foot*, tradition 2135. See *The Series of Authentic Traditions*, p.205.

She found in this an appropriate opportunity to turn to the speaker once more, in view of his special condition, and thanked him, saying jokingly, “You have won first prize in this lecture. It is the trust given to you by the audience” He showed great pleasure and thanked her and the audience.

Then she gave the floor to another speaker, who said, “I have found a story similar to a previously mentioned one, namely, that a companion, known by the name of Abu Dharr, came to Mecca in the early days of the Prophet’s preaching and proclaimed his conversion to Islam, proposing to stay with the Prophet, pbuh. But the Prophet, pbuh, advised him to return to his country, because he would not be able to bear the difficult situation in Mecca. He said this out of mercy and pity for Abu Dharr.”[91]

“I believe that the motive behind this advice from the Messenger, pbuh, was his mercy for him. When searching for more information on this companion, I found that the Prophet, pbuh, told him on a certain occasion that he was a weak person[92] , which confirms what a I have mentioned.”

Dr. Adam turned to the audience for their views and they approved the inclusion of this example among those indicating the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, towards his companions.

Dr. Adam asked the audience if there was anyone who desired to add anything to what was said. A female raised her hand and said, “I have consulted the verse that deals with the shortening of prayer, and looked for the beautiful gesture inherent therein and I think I have found it.”

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[91] Reported by Muslim, the Section on *The Merits of Abu Dharr, tradition 2473*
[9] Reported by Muslim, in the Section on *The Unnecessary Detestation of Public Position*, tradition 1825.
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Dr. Adam was pleased at that and said, “Please go ahead,” and the woman said, “I have read in the books on exegesis the following: that Ya’la ibn Omayyah has said, ‘I have said to Omar bin Al-Khattab that God said, “for fear the unbelievers may attack you”, (although) people have become secure?” Omar bin Al-Khattab said he was just as surprised as he was, and he asked the Messenger of God, pbuh, and he said, “it is a gift from God; so accept His gift.”[93] Dr. Adam quickly replied, “You are quite right; this is what I wanted to say.”

This is because the reduction of the number of cycles of prayers at first was on account of the Muslims’ fear of attack by their enemies while they were praying during travel or when at war.

Some of the companions had expected that such provision would be revoked after the threat by the enemies was over and the Muslims became secure.

But the Prophet, pbuh, told them that even after the establishment of security and the absence of danger the provision remained applicable as a gift and bounty from their Lord. This is an indication that mercy is intended to be applicable even in the case of religious duties.

Dear audience,

The gradual enactment of duties is among the most salient of manifestations of mercy that have attracted my attention and admiration in the life story of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh. It is something the like of which I have never known. Now allow

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[93] Reported by Muslim, in the Section on *The prayer and the shortening thereof,* tradition *686*.

me to give you a definition of gradualness so that its meaning would be alive in our minds. Thus the Arabic equivalent of gradualness is *tadarruj*, which is derived from the verb *daraja*, which means the beginning of walking step by step, as when the verb is used to indicate the first steps of children, when they begin to walk slowly and cautiously.[94]

It is this meaning of gradualness which we have in mind in this lecture, which indicates “the gradual approach to some thing until the intended objective is realized, pursuant to special legitimate methods[95].

A close look at the directives of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, to his followers will reveal very clearly this approach of gradualness. He used to take them by the hand, as it were, just as an affectionate mother takes her child by the hand when teaching him to walk its first steps.

If it is mercy that prompts a mother to treat her child so gently when teaching him how to walk for fear it might stumble and fall, which all people can witness for themselves, then we can see that it is the same mercy that made the Prophet adopt a gradual method in establishing religious provisions and duties.

You are all aware that when a habit is rooted in a human being, it would be difficult to eradicate it, or even to modify it. It is as though, as some writers on ethics have said, that a habit sinks its roots deeply in the nerve system[96]. This means that gradualness in legislation is gradualness in ethical education.

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[94] Dr. Ibrahim Anis *et al, Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasseet,* v.1, p.277, with some adaptation
[95] Dr. Daraz, *The Constitution of Ethics in the Qur'an*, p.83.
[96] Dr. Daraz, *The Constitution of Ethics in the Qur'an*, p.83

Thus the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, has preached this religion and the duties and guidance it involves and sought to liberate humanity from the negative habits, the lusts to which some were victims ever since they were young up to the time when they grew old. Therefore, it was imperative that these facts be taken into account, in the quest that aims at rectifying and correcting the course that was injudiciously followed by humanity that had gone astray.

However, as it is difficult to trace the manifestations of gradualness in the approach of the Prophet, because they are so numerous and varied, allow me to restrict myself to just one case, which I believe is a clear indication of what we have said. This is the prohibition of intoxicants.

I would like to be cautious and indicate that dealing with this matter is not an end in itself. I have brought it up because it is a means to an end, and an example of an approach. I say this because I do not propose to deal with such matters in my cultural lectures. But it is necessary to reveal the status of mercy in this matter, and its role in dealing with many of the problems that beset communities, in a style that may be beneficial to humanity at present, just as it was beneficial for it in the past.

I am certain that intoxicants have plagued every age and go back to hundreds of years, and I fear to say “if not thousands of years”, lest I should be required to provide evidence, which I do not possess at present. There is no doubt that the partaking of intoxicants is a bad habit, by all measures and that there is hardly a community that has been spared this bad habit from time immemorial. This is because it has been transmitted from one generation to another and has sunk its roots deeply in the nervous system of people, indeed in the very being of those who had become used and addicted to it.

The Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, has come into an environment that extols alcoholic beverage and prides itself on partaking of it, to the point that it can be said that there was hardly a single person who had not engaged in it, barring a very few who had deviated from what was customary during their life. I can mention Abu Kakr Al-Siddiaq, the first Khalif of the Prophet, pbuh, who had never tasted it, be it before or after Islam.

Evidence of the strong influence of intoxicants on people, and their domination of those addicted to them, can be seen in the story of the great poet Al-A'sha, who admired the message of the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, and decided to go to him and declare his conversion. However, Quraish feared that if he entered Islam and praised the Prophet, pbuh, in his poetry, people would hasten to believe in him, in view of the well known fame of this poet.

Therefore, the Qurashites decided to try to dissuade him from doing so. So, Abu Sufian, the then leader of Quraish, said to him, "Where are you heading, O, Abu Basir?" and he replied, "I am heading to your man in order to declare my conversion to Islam." Aby Sufian said, """But he prohibits many things if you do convert to Islam." When he asked about such prohibitions, Abu Sifian said, "the Prophet forbids adultery," to which the poet commented saying that he did not mind that, and asked about further prohibitions. Abu Sufian added the prohibition of gambling, to which the poet said he hoped that the Prophet would compensate him with something for gambling. Abu Sufian then mentioned usury, and the poet said that he had never been a lender or a borrower, so he would not be affected by that. Then Abu Sufian mentioned the prohibition of intoxicants, and the poet paused and said he would return to his country and drink for the remaining part of

the year and then would come back to the Prophet. So he returned to his country and died on his way.[97]

It is not conceivable, dear audience that the Merciful God would send down a religion, the most prominent of whose aims is not the prohibition of intoxicants. But how to achieve this and rid society of their endless mischief.

Mercy requires that intoxicants be banned, and the same mercy requires that the status of intoxicants in the view of people be considered. Therefore, it was necessary to adopt a well conceived plan for the achievement of this noble objective. Such plan should not involve the immediate and absolute prohibition; otherwise, it would not be possible to convince people to obey.

This has been appreciated by lady Aisha, the spouse of the Prophet, pbuh, who said, "The first revelation was a Surah that mentioned paradise and hell, and when people entered Islam, provisions governing what is *halal* lawful) and *haram* (unlawful) were revealed. Had the prohibition of intoxicant beverages been revealed first, people would have said they would never quit them…"[98]

Lady Aisha's tradition reveals something of great importance, namely, the phenomenon that is evidenced by the actual facts and confirmed by actual events, which indicates that the Quranic provisions concerning duties, *halal* and *haram*, were revealed only after faith had become deeply rooted in the souls of the believers and people had become fully convinced of this religion and their hears had felt the extent of the Prophet's mercy towards them, and his intense care for them.

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[97] Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa Nnihaya*, v.4, p.250, edited by Dr.

[98] Reported by Bukhari, in the Section on *The Compiling of the Qur'an*, tradition 4993.

Allow me to outline the features of the gradual prohibitions of intoxicants and the gradual steps through which the prohibition had gone and hope you would follow me and feel the aspects of mercy in this exposition.

In the initial stages of the revelation of the Qur'an, there was a great many references to reward and punishment. Thus there was reference to the wine of Paradise and was described as being free of the negative effects in the intoxicants of this world: "*.. in Gardens of delight, facing each other on raised couches; round will be passed to them a cup from a clear-flowing fountain, crystal white, of a taste delicious to those who drink(thereof), free from headiness; nor will they feel intoxication therefrom* (Al-Saaffaat, 43-47). Thus wine in Paradise does not baffle the minds, does not spoil the bodies, and does not destroy those who drink it[99]; it is in paradise a delicious drink: *"Rivers of wine, a joy to those who drink."*, Muhammad, 15).

You may have noticed, dear adience, that the verses praised the wine of Paradise, but did not vilify the wine of this life; it may be that it left it to the companions of the Prophet, pbuh, who hear the words to make the comparison.

Then, the Qur'an went one step further, which many scholars consider to be the first step in the process of prohibition.

Scholar Daraz says, "The first step along this road was taken in a word that was revealed in Mecca, a word that had gently touched the hearts. Thus amongst the bounties God has created in nature, the Qur'an mentions the fruits of palm trees and vine and adds thereto: *"And from the fruit of the date-palm and the vine, ye get out strong drink and a wholesome food, in this*

[99] Jamal el-Dine Al-Qassimi, *Beauties of Interpretation,* v.8, p.89, 2003, Dar Al-Hadioth, Cairo, edited by Ahmad bin Ali and Hamdi SubuH

also is a sign for those who are wise." (Al-NaHl, 67). It was merely a weighing between strong drink and the other fruits, which it describes as being wholesome, without describing the strong drink itself. In this manner, the believers came to feel some embarrassment and misgivings towards this type of drink.[100]

By the way, I apologize for some of the texts which I sometimes quote and which is difficult to wholly assimilate in this quick discussion, but I promise to pass them to you, for further consideration.

I also adopt this subtle Quranic style sometimes. Thus when I meet two of my students at the end of the semester, after they had sat for an exam, and they ask me about the result, I tell the one who passed the exam that he had done well and succeeded in the exam, but I do not say anything to the other. I believed that he would understand this subtle hint, which involves a certain touch of mercy, as I would not wish to face him with the sad result.

In the last quoted verse, the Qur'an has described the food as wholesome and was silent as regards the wine. So the followers of the Prophet, pbuh, would have realized that the wine was not wholesome, but nothing else.

After a few years, the Qur'an makes use of an incident, which was reported by exegesists and tradition scholars, to the effect that the companion Abdul RaHman bin 'Awf had invited people to partake of some food that he had prepared for them and offered them wine to drink. When it was time for prayer, they asked one of them to lead the prayer and he made a mistake while reading the Qur'an on account of his having drunk wine. So God sent down the verse: *"O ye who believe,*

[100] *The Constitution of Ethics, ibid.*

approach not prayers in a state of intoxication, until you understand what you are saying."(An-Nisaa',43). Thus so far, God had not ordained the prohibition of wine, but enjoined them against approaching prayer in a state of drunkenness.

This second step came to restrict wine and narrow the time for those who wish to drink. This was because prayer would no longer be proper with the drinking of wine. Moreover, the prayers, almost covered the entire day and night. Thus this indirect partial prohibition was a logical approach to expand the span of time for the cessation of the effect of alcohol, and was at the same time a method for the reduction of the popularity and gradual elimination of wine, without causing an economic crisis as a result of the sudden total prohibition.[101]

The partaking of intoxicants by the companions began to decline after it was made incompatible with prayers and after the siege was imposed on it, which made some of them wonder as to where it stands, to the answer of which God's ordinance was revealed: "*They will ask thee about intoxicants and games of chance, say, 'in both there is great evil and some benefit for man, but the evil which they cause is greater than the benefit which they bring.'"*(Al-Baqarah, 219).

This Quranic text is explicit in that the evil of intoxicants is greater than their benefit. Let me now draw your attention to beautiful gestures in this noble verse. It has mentioned the evil before the benefit, as being the rule and described the evil as great but did not say anything about its benefit, which is a godsend mercy, because it contributes to the distancing and alienation from intoxicants.

It seems to me that the matter had become self evident, and this being the case, the companions began to feel a kind of

[101] Dr. Daraz, *The Constitution of Ethics,* pp.84-85.

aversion to intoxicants, and expected that it would be expressly prohibited any moment after the preceding anticipation, to the point that Omar bin Al-Khattab, the second Khalif of the Prophet, found himself raising his hand in supplication: "O, God, enlighten us adequately concerning intoxicants."[102]

It is also reported hat the companions had started giving up intoxicants before its Quranic prohibition, so that Abdullah bin Omar said, "Intoxicants were prohibited even when there was no trace of it in Medina."[103]. He definitely did not mean to generalize fully, but his statement purports that intoxicants had not existed as before, as though they had given it up before they were required to do so.

The companions had started as though they were expecting a forthcoming prohibition, which they had been prepared to accept, even to look forward to, as though they were asking for it. Such was the prohibition applied when God's revelation came down; *"O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, sacrificing to stones, and (divination) by arrows, are an abomination, of Satan's handiwork: Eschew such (abomination) that ye may prosper."*(Al-Maídah, 90).

Thus prohibition and abstaining have taken place in a surprising manner, a miracle of accurate implementation and quick response. Let me, dear audience, invite the companion, Anas bin Malek, to give us the complete picture of this astonishing and solemn episode. He said,

"I was offering to Abu Obaidah Al-JarraH, Abu TalHah Al-Ansari and Ubay bin Ka'b a drink of dates, when a messenger came and said that intoxicants had been prohibited.

[102] See *At-TaHrir wat Tanwir*, v.7, p.21, *ibid.*
[103] See *Al-taHrir wa ttanwir*, v.7, p.21, *ibid.*

Thereupon, Abu TalHa said, "Go and break these jugs.' So I took a stone and hit them therewith until they broke."[104] In another report, "Abu TalHah told me to go out and spill them, which I did and they flowed through the conduits of Medina.[105]

Allow me, now to quote a beautiful comment by Dr. Daraz, who said, "This easy, gradual method reminds us of the method adopted by skilful physicians in the treatment of a chronic disease, indeed to remember in general the method used by mothers in weaning their babies. This is because these methods, which are free from violence and suddenness make the digestive system change its routine gradually, beginning with the lightest of foods, through the middle degrees, up to the most difficult to digest. How great is God's Mercy that treats men gently, in a manner that surpasses the art of treatment and the tenderness of mothers"[106]. How beautiful and how true !

Dear audience,

I had intended to end my talk on intoxicants with those words, but I have changed my mind and decided to give you a brief contrasting picture of what has preceded in that respect. It is the American Law on the prohibition of intoxicants – how it began and how it ended.

In 1933 a law was issued prohibiting intoxicants in America and was appended to Article Eighteen of the Constitution, which provides for this prohibition and the procedures that should be applied for the implementation thereof. But no

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[104] Reported by Malek in *Al-MawTe,*, the Section on the *Prohibition of Intoxicants*, tradition 1599, p.517.
[105] See Al-Bukhari in *kitab al-mazalem*, in the Section on *the Spilling of Intoxicants in the Street*, tradition 2464.
[106]*Dr. Daraz, The Constitution of Ethics in the Qur'an,* p.85.

sooner had that law been issued than the secret trade in intoxicants became rampant.

Thus, types of intoxicants were sold that were harmful to life and there occurred a proliferation of the secret places where intoxicants were made and sold, and the places for the illegal sale increased. So, before the prohibition, there had been about four hundred factories, but seven years after the prohibition their number was close to eighty thousand.

Moreover, intoxicants were consumed by all categories of people and included all the regions of the country, including villages and the rural areas, the rate of crimes escalated, and pubs multiplied.

The statistics of the American Judiciary have indicated that about two hundred persons were executed and the crimes of children increased, so much so that America's judges announced that the number of children who were arrested while drunk was unprecedented.

Police reports indicated that the number of addicts among children rose to thrice the number and the number of deaths rose to twice the number before the prohibition.

In consequence of this failure and as a result of the losses in life and funds, the state revoked the law and permitted the production of intoxicants, in which the percentage of alcohol was less than 33%. Then, in the same year, the abrogation of Article Eighteen that prohibited intoxicants was officially announced and the previous status of intoxicants was restored after an unsuccessful attempt made by the American

government, with all its might, for a period of fourteen years.[107]

An American scientist has commented on this, saying, "The decision to prohibit intoxicants was not because intoxicants were good, bad or harmful or unharmful; it was revoked for practical reasons, namely, that the prohibition has failed.[108]

I may have dwelt too long on the subject of intoxicants. However, I did that deliberately in order to show, first, the aspects of mercy that have led to its obliteration in Islamic society, as opposed to the elements of force that failed to prohibit them.

Moreover, while mercy was clearly apparent in the gradual prohibition of intoxicants, the same mercy was more apparent in the prohibition itself. I have read in a medical source that intoxicants have caused the following damage to the body:

1. The destruction of the brain cells; 2. The damaging of the liver; 3.The reduction of the breathing process; 4. The decrease of immunity in the body; 5. The frailty of bones; 5. stomach ulcer and cancer. There are other health ailments, which space does not permit the enumeration thereof, not to mention the social and economic damage which you are all aware of. Thus prohibition was truly a mercy to people.

Contemporary humanity is in a dire need for the sword of mercy, which is associated with gradualness, which Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, has brandished in the face of intoxicants until it eliminated them gently and lovingly.

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[107] See Dr. Fikri Akkar, *Intioxicants in Islamic Jurisprudence: an Analytic Study*, first impression, 1977.
[108] *Ibid.*, p.175.

I conclude by saying that the gradual establishment of legislation and provisions was a distinctive characteristic of this religion`, which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad, pbuh. This was not confined only to intoxicants but also to fasting, *zakat* and other matters such as usury, as some scholars have indicated.

Thus, fasting was at first voluntary, but when people got used to it, it became binding on them and a major duty, as God Almighty said, *"Hence, whoever of you lives to see this month shall fast throughout it."* Al-Baqrah, 185)

Moroever, *zakat* was in the Meccan period unrestricted, determined by people's faith and feeling of the duty of brotherhood towards their believing brethren. Thus it was enough to spend a little amount of money, but there might be a need for spending plenty more.[109] Then in the second Hegira year, it became a duty and an essential pillar of Islam, with special rules, conditions and applications.

Thus mercy appears in all these provisions and legislations and was apparent in every step taken by Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, in his guidance of humanity to ethical transcendence.

You are certainly aware of the close association and integration between the Mercy of Almighty God, in promulgating these merciful provisions, and the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, who received them in order to implement them gently and mercifully.

Before concluding, I apologize for dwelling too long on this matter, but I wanted to complete this interlinked subject. Thank you again and see you next lecture.

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[109] Youssof Al-Qaradawi, *The Jurisprudence of Zakat*, v.1, p.77, with some adaptation.

Sixth Lecture
Imperative Justice & Imperative Mercy
Balance & Integration

Dr. Adam began her sixth lecture by greeting the audience and thanking them for coming and said , “I am pleased to continue my exposition of the manifestations of the Prophet’s mercy towards his followers, as there are important aspects that I have not yet dealt with. These are connected with the application of mercy in the performance of acts of worship and their effects on those same acts of worship, which we have talked about in the previous lecture.

In this lecture, however, I intend to expand on these examples in order to show that this mercy has always been associated with the acts of worship. I shall move on, then, to talk on the close association between imperative justice and imperative mercy. Thus, in addition to the obvious manifestations of this mercy, such as the gradual revelation of the religious provisions and the amendments of some of them in certain cases on account of an exceptional circumstance, and in addition to the fact that the Prophet, pbuh, in indicating those legislations, was aware of human nature and the needs hereof – despite all that, the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, was not confined to those aspects, but extended to others as well.

Thus it extended beyond that to include the application of mercy with a view to implanting in human souls that mercy is not a mere word, or feeling, that human beings experience, but is rather a practice and a reality that is reflected by tangible exponents.

It is well known that the thing that was most dearly loved by the Prophet, pbuh, was prayer and communication with God Almighty. But strangely enough, he used to shorten the prayer when leading the congregation in prayer, and would inform people why he had shortened his prayer, saying, “I would embark on prayer desiring to dwell on it, but when I hear a child cry, while I am praying, I would recite short surahs and light surahs, in consideration of his mother’s anxiety when he cries.[110]

This was not an isolated case, but was an established practice, as confirmed by his servant, Anas, who kept him close company, who said, “When the Prophet hears a baby cry, while he is praying, he would recite
short surahs and light surahs.[111]

Thus in payers performed by hundreds of his companions, all of whom desire, just as the Prophet, pbuh, desires, to lengthen it, the crying of a baby whose mother is participating in the prayer, prompts the Prophet, pbuh, to shorten it, by way of mercy towards the mother, as he is aware of her tender feelings and pity towards her baby, and towards the crying baby, as he is too pitiful to hear a baby cries.

Another case in point is reported of the Prophet, pbuh, who, when passing by the dwelling of his daughter, Fatimah, and hearing Hussein crying, said to Fatimah, “You know very well that his crying hurts me.”[112] It is a practical lesson in mercy that the Prophet, pbuh, is keen on implanting in his companions.

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[110] Al-Bukhari, the Book of adhan, in the Section on *the shortening of prayer when a baby cries, tradition 1707.*

[111] Al-Bukhari, in the Section on *The Imam shortening prayer in case of emergency,* tradition 989.

[112] From *the Attributes of the Prophe,* p.210, *ibid.*

In another episode, he was informed that one of his companions would lengthen his prayer when leading a group of men, he admonished him and said, “Do not alienate people. He who leads others in prayer should lighten his prayer, as there may be among them those who are sick, weak or pressed.”[113]

It is the mercy of the Prophet that has prompted the Prophet, pbuh, to make this classification and to require those who lead prayers not to lengthen the prayer, to take into consideration the conditions of the categories he has enumerated.

While talking, Dr. Adam noticed a member of the audience turn to his neighbor and whisper something in his ear and they both smiled. At this point, she paused and they looked at her. He smiled in her turn and asked whether there was something which the whole audience could share with them. One of them said that he frankly told his friend that the Prophet, pbuh, could have told the mother and her baby and those who have special circumstances not to attend the prayer, so that he might pray with his companions as they wished, and would not have to say or do what he did.

Dr. Adam turned to the audience and asked them for their opinion of what they had heard. But only one said, “this is, in any case, a matter of opinion, but wee not aware of the conditions and the circumstances at that time.”
Dr Adam thanked those who had expressed their opinion and said, “I am glad to hear this point of view, because it has given me the opportunity to clarify an important matter, namely, that we sometimes judge, amylase and form an opinion with

[113] Reported by Muslim, in the Section on *Ordering Imams to lighten prayer*, tradition 4t68.

regard thereto in light of our contemporary culture, being affected by our environment and its successive events and consecutive positions. This is called the impressionistic approach and the projective approach.

There have spread amongst us statements that are often deprived of mercy, such as the interest of the community has precedence over that of the individual, and that exceptional cases are irrelevant and should be ignored, and that the individual is the fuel of the community and is a mere wheel in its cart.

The implications of this culture make us wonder as to the practices of the Propher, pbuh, which are in fact a reflection of his greatness and a symbol of mercy for both the individual and the community.

The mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, has encompassed individuals, as such, as well as the interest of the community. Thus the interest of the community is well taken care of, but the interest of the individual is also important. Thus it is important to make sure that, in the protection of the interests and the practice of mercy, no right should encroach on any other right.
The view we have already heard, which was the reason why we have made this digression is a sign that there are negative aspects for those who resort to them, and I am definitely not addressing those who have pointed out to this minor point, but rather refer to those who make this a way of life and who deal with people in terms thereof. This is because it involves a defective approach and a failure to encompass all followers and all the loved ones, and means that this symbol, or paragon, or saint, has come to be confined to a category to the exclusion of another.

The fact is that all humanity is in a dire need for this merciful approach. What we witness today in the real world abounds in cases where the individual is ignored for the sake of the community, on the basis of feeble arguments. But the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, offers to all humanity balanced types in which the interests of both individuals and communities are realized.

I would like to remind you that we have touched on an aspect of this talk in a previous lecture and that we considered this to be a faulty practice because it lacks balance and universality.

In brief, I have shown that it is inconceivable, in light of what we have discussed, that the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, should make any one of his followers feel that he is deprived of his attention and that it is not possible for him to act in such a manner as to deprive anyone of them from his mercy.

The Prophet, pbuh, possesses such munificent attributes as to enable him to accomplish what he wishes to accomplish without this being at the expense of anyone of those who surround him. In this context, I venture to say that I have not found in the life story of any great figures such attribute, which I do not tire of reiterating and say that it is one of the most salient of the manifestations of the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh.

I can adduce further anecdotes that reflect the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, which, like before, occurred in the course of prayers. Thus it happened that a companion by the name of Ma'awyah As-Slami has prayed with the Prophet and, during the prayer, he spoke to one next to him. Thereupon, the other companions looked disapprovingly at him. So he said, "Why do you look at me like that? But they signaled to me to keep silent, which I did.

When the Messenger of God finished praying, he neither blamed me nor admonished me, but merely said, 'This prayer is not suitable for people's talk; it is but glorification, exaltation and recital of the Qur'an.' I have never seen before or after him a better teacher!."

The Prophet, pbuh, has been merciful to this companion and spoke to him gently although he had disturbed the prayer of the congregation. Thus this companion has been made to feel the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, which feeling never left him thereafter, and justified his statement that he has never nor will ever see a better teacher.

There goes a practical lesson for educators, for every time and place. It is a lesson for them to be merciful towards the ignorant and to guide them gently. While modern educational theories advocate this approach in teaching and education, the Prophet of Mercy has exemplified them in practice hundreds of years ago.

Thus, while the Prophet, pbuh, would be in the process of performing acts of worship, which meant so much to him, he was never oblivious of his companions, and was alert to spare them any difficulties or embarrassment, out of mercy for them.

Another case in point is reported by Lady Aishah, the Prophet's spouse. She reported that he used to observe night prayers, during the month of Ramadan, what is known as the *tarawiH* prayer. He kept leading the congregation in prayer for days and then stopped going out to pray with them. When asked for the reason, he said, "I was afraid it would be

imposed on them as an obligatory duty," which is a clear gesture of mercy towards them.[114]

More obvious is the statement of Aishah, who said, "The Prophet used to avoid doing things which he liked doing, lest people would do likewise and lest they would be considered an obligatory duty.[115]

The Prophet, pbuh, did not abuse his companion's love for him and their keenness on emulating him and perform difficult actions in their presence for them to imitate him. This was not the approach of the Prophet, pbuh, but was that of his predecessors – the saints, some of whom used to fast for days and abstain from sleep night after night - as this would be a strain on their followers, if any.

There is a great difference between him who looks behind him when walking to assure himself of their condition individually as they follow him, and show them great tenderness while they follow him, to make sure he does not go too far beyond them or alienate them by way of his mercy towards them, just like a father who looks after his children, and him who is oblivious and unconscious of them and singly proceeds on his way in order to achieve for himself greatness and immortal fame, in his single-handedness, as he deludes himself, seemingly thinking that he who is strong let him follow me and he who has energy let him endure.

He told them openly: "I am like a father to you." A father treats his children mercifully and tenderly and does not cause them hardships.

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[114] SaHih Muslim, the Book on the prayer of travelers and its shortening, in the Section on *Encouraging night prayer in Ramadan (tarawiH)*, tradition 761.
[115] Reportd by Al-Bukhari, in the Section on *the Prophet's Encouraging people to perform night prayer, tradition 1128*

Thank you for your patient listening. I propose a short break and then we shall continue, as usual.

Dr. Adam entered the hall to resume the Sixth lecture. She had disordered papers. It seems she was reading them before entering the hall. She welcomed the audience saying,

“Welcome to you all in the second half of this lecture, which I have reserved for elucidating an important matter, namely, the position of mercy among other moral virtues, and for indicating its relation to other virtues and legitimate laws.

I can sum up these phrases by one word, which I put in the form of a question: Did Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, exemplify the dictum “Mercy First” in all his forms of behavior? I have deliberately delayed this matter to the Sixth Lecture in order to make it easy for the dear audience to recall attitudes and events that we have considered. These contribute to the answering of this question, which should not be raised in the abstract.

Dear audience,

In order to answer this question, an introduction is necessary, which I hope will not be boring. Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, was sent for the purpose of completing human innate character, to coexist therewith and to preserve it. He was not sent in order to alienate people from it and change it. This means he used to invoke the nature of the human soul, its needs and emotions. We have adduced many situations that clearly confirm this.

Allow me now to make a short digression in this respect. I wish to mention to you that humanity today is suffering greatly on account of going against the soul’s natural disposition and

its attempt to annihilate it through many actions which we hear about and see in many areas that are devoid from mercy in all its aspects. This is because mercy can never exist except when there is a sound disposition.

In light of what sociologists term “social empathy”, which means being conscious of the feeling of others and the respect of their rights and the adoption of a behavior that reflects this awareness, it is imperative that such rules and systems be established that would control the behavior of individuals and take for them from society and take from them for society.[116]

In such cases, there inevitably arise the rights and duties and impose themselves. Thus justice is a duty, and the restitution of rights to their owners is necessary, and the individual has the right to have his interests preserved.

These are clear grounds which have been confirmed by Shari’ah provisions and translated by the Prophet’s practices. Thus it has been firmly established in people’s minds that justice is a duty, but what must be appreciated and immediately recalled is that mercy is also a duty and not a condescendence from the Islamic viewpoint.

Let me illustrate. If a person borrows a sum of money, then he is obligated to repay the money to the lender, which is only fair. But if the borrower is unable to repay the debt on time because he is insolvent, then justice also requires the lender to give the borrower a respite, out of mercy towards the borrower.

But in this case, the Qur’an provides another guidance, namely that the lender forgoes his money, if he can afford that, which

[116] See Dr. Majdi Atef, *Dictionary of Sociology,* p.210.

is a case of mercy in all its manifestations. In this respect, the Qur'an says, *"If the debtor is in difficulty, give him time till it is easy for him to repay. But if you remit it by way of charity, that is best for you, if ye only knew*" (Al-Baqarah, 280).

This Divine offer involves an exchange of mercy with mercy, so to speak. Thus giving one's funds in charity by way of mercy on the part of the creditor, is rewarded with mercy by God Almighty. The Prophet, pbuh, has encouraged people to make use of this offer, saying, "Have mercy on those who are on earth, and you will be rewarded by mercy by Him Who is in Heaven."

To further encourage people to benefit from this mercy that is associated with such duty, the Prophet related the story of a man who used to practice this type of mercy and was rewarded by being admitted to Paradise. He said, "A merchant used to sell people on credit. Whenever he saw anyone in financial difficulty, he would tell his assistants to be easy on him, in the hope that God would be easy on them, and God was easy on him."[117]

In another context, the Qur'an stresses the duty of punishment: "*O, ye who believe, just retribution is ordained for you in cases of killing: the free for the free, the slave for the slave, the woman for the woman. But if any remission is remitted to a guilty person… this remission shall be adhered to with fairness, and restitution to his fellow-man* (the aggrieved party) *shall be made in a goodly manner. This is an alleviation from your Lord and an act of mercy. And for him who, none the less, willfully transgresses the bounds of what is right, there is grievous suffering in store.*"" (al-Baqarah, 178).

[117] SaHih Al-Bukhari, The Book on Sales, in the Section on *He who gives respite to a person in financial difficulty*, tradition 2078.

Thus God has first established the right of retribution to the relatives of the killed, and then he mentioned mercy. In another context, God has made retribution in kind a right to the aggrieved party, but at the same time, He made the showing of mercy to and pardoning of the aggressor an act of charity and an atonement for the aggrieved party: "*And We ordained therein (The Torah),a life for a life, an eye for an eye and a nose for a nose, and an ear for an ear, and a tooth for a tooth and a (similar) retribution fro wounds. But if any one remits the retaliation by way of charity, it is an atonement for himself. But if any fail to judge by what God has revealed, they are wrong-doers.*" (Al-Ma'idah, 45).

In short, dear Audience…

Thus while establishing the right of retribution, the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, in addition, mentions the duty of mercy just as justice is a duty. It is no exaggeration to say that a close look at the texts would make us feel that it seems as though there was a plan that aims at narrowing the scope of justice to make way for the practice of mercy.

This is clearly evident in the rewards God has promised to those who give precedence to mercy over justice and forgive and excuse. Some of the conditions and stipulations whose details have been expounded by the merciful Prophet, pbuh, in the application of punishments and retribution will be dealt with below, soon.

Modern civilization has excelled in the establishment and enactment of laws and the application thereof, but it has failed in devising the mercy which must be associated with these laws, in such a manner that rights are not neglected or lost

while applying such mercy. This, the Prophet of mercy is offering to humanity today, just as he has done before.

To revert to our previous question, it can be said that the priority of mercy was a prominent feature of the behavior and verdicts of Muhammad, pbuh, as he has always had in mind the *Qudsi* (Holy/Divine) Tradition, "My (God's) mercy precedes my wrath." Following are some events, which will further elucidate and clarify this matter.

A companion by the name of "Maez" once came to the Prophet, pbuh, and confessed that he had committed adultery and requested the Prophet, pbuh, to punish him for his sin and thereby purify him. In this instance, the Prophet exercised the role of a judge and of a lawyer, simultaneously. Thus he tried to dissuade the man from admission of his guilt and suggested to him arguments that would exempt him from punishment. Thus he put it to the man that he might not have committed adultery, but that he rather did so and so (short of committing adultery). The Prophet, pbuh, even went as far as asking his other companions to make sure the man was not out of his mind, being anxious to hear something of the sort, which would relieve the man from punishment.[118]

This, I believe, is a practical lesson in the exercising of mercy in the society of the Prophet, pbuh. But lest some may think that such behavior is restricted to the Prophet, pbuh, it must be pointed out that, he would follow his statement with action, and remind people on several occasions of the importance of showung mercy to every single individual of the community, or others.

[118] SaHiiH al-Bukhari, *Kitaab al-MuHaaribiin,* the Section on "*Does the Imam ask the Confessing Culprit: 'You might have (just) touched or winked?,* Tradition *6824'*

When the Prophet, pbuh, says, “It is only an unfortunate person who is deprived of mercy,”[119] each one of his companions would make sure the Prophet’s statement of such horrible attribute did not apply to him. They were well aware of God’s account of the fire of Hell, *“Only the unfortunate shall suffer its scorching pain”* (Al-Lail: 15). Hence, they realized that salvation and the escape from such disaster is made possible by exercising mercy.

It should be pointed out that such merciful behavior was not confined to this man only; it was, rather a norm of behavior to be applied by the judiciary and rulers that would succeed him, and indeed by all people. It involves helping those who slip to save their skins, and preclude the imposing of punishment on them.

In this behavior, the Prophet, pbuh, has shown the way to those in charge to preclude punishment on the basis of mistakable evidence and this has become a well established Shari’ah rule among jurists and was adopted by the law scholars, more than a thousand years later, when they ruled that an accused person is innocent until proven guilty. Thus the credit of this merciful rule goes to the Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, and has come to be applied in a manner that realizes both justice and mercy.

The examples we have cited, and have chosen to confine ourselves to for the sake of brevity, show that, for the Prophet, pbuh, mercy takes precedence and is considered a duty that is on a par with other duties, which is undoubtedly a bright prospect. At this juncture, a person in the audience raised his hand and said, “Some other persons may see in this a negative

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[119] Reported by al-Tirmidhi, the Section on *The Mercy of Muslims*, tradition 1923, and admitted its authenticity>

aspect, as such an approach might encourage indulgence in excesses and violations. What does the honorable lecturer think of that?"

Dr Adam thanked him and said, "This is a legitimate question and is worth considering. It is worth indicating, at first, that the Prophet, pbuh, has criticized exaggeration ,as such, anywhere and in any form. He said it in so many words, "Beware of exaggeration"[120], which is the exceeding of boundaries that leads to corruption, because virtue lies in the middle of two vices.

Thus, exaggeration in the application of mercy, in terms of overdoing such application, is no less reprehensible than neglect of its application, when there is a need for giving it precedence so that it would lead to the realization of its purpose.

The Prophet of Mercy, pbuh, has succeeded, in his words and deeds, what previous great figures have been unable to do. Such figures are either well known warring leaders famous for their strength, such as Alexander and Holagu, to whom virtues were virtually unknown; or are those who merely advocate virtues, mercy and tolerance, without practicing them..

None of the two approaches would work, as neither always contains an enticement to associate oneself with. Thus the Prophet, pbuh, has advocated a balanced approach that combines both strength and mercy and mixed them in a brilliant way. Hence, his approach has succeeded, as we have seen how force protects mercy, just as mercy has refined strength and held the elements of evil under control

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[120] Reported by Ibn Majah, *The Book on Rites,* tradition 3029, which is an authentic tradition. See Al-Albani, S*ahih Ibn Majah*, v.3, p.49,.

The Prophet of Mercy has implanted mercy in its proper soil and applied it in contexts that require it, thus realizing in so doing the best results, without neglecting or being oblivious of firmness and strength. Thus, I do not believe that there was any occurrence in which the Prophet, pbuh, gave precedence to mercy, no matter how hard we try to scrutinize the surrounding circumstances of the application thereof.

There are several incidents that show that mercy could not prevail over other considerations. Thus during the lifetime of the Prophet, pbuh, there was a thief who was committing the sin of theft, and was reported to the Prophet, pbuh, who ordered that his hand be amputated. The effect of the pain and sorrow that the Companions saw on the face of the Prophet, pbuh, prompted one of them to say, "Please, forgive him, O, Messenger of God." The Prophet responded saying, "This could have been possible before the matter was reported to me. But now that it has, it is out of the question."[121]

It also happened that a woman, who was a member of some reputed people, was reported to the Prophet, pbuh, as having stolen, and people thought of a way to save her from punishment. They asked his beloved Osamah ben Zaid to intercede and seek his forgiveness.

So Osamah approached the Prophet, pbuh, who said, "Would you intercede in a case of violation of God's orders?" In his sermon, the Prophet, pbuh, said, "People before you were destroyed because when a notable person committed a theft, they would leave him alone, but when a weak person committed such a sin, they punished him. I swear by God, that

[121] Reported by Imam Malek in his book *Al-Mawte'* ,in the Section on *the cancellation of intercession if the matter is reported t the authorities.*

if Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad, were to steal, Muhammad would amputate her hand."[122]

The aforementioned cases clearly confirm that when values and established norms are involved, mercy would be out of the question. In the first case, the Prophet, pbuh, wished that the matter of the theft had not been brought before him. But once, such a matter is brought before a ruler, he may not freeze the application of rules, lest this be a precedent for other rulers succeeding him.

In the second case, the woman happened to belong to a nobility class. In such case, mercy would mean the abolishing of justice among the majority of people, and the establishment of privileges for high society, which the Prophet, pbuh, would never consider under any circumstances. For this the sentences were carried out, and he overruled considerations of mercy under such circumstances.

I must not omit saying that this woman had become a welcome person in the Prophet's household and paid frequent visits to Aisha, the Prophet's wife, who used to bring the woman's needs to the Prophet, pbuh, and he used to promptly respond to her needs, by way of mercy for her and restitution of her position in society, after she had suffered the prescribed punishment for her theft. Thus Islam has no place for individuals with previous "criminal" records, unlike positive law, which follows the convicted person, even after his having reformed after the punishment had been inflicted on him.

The Prophet, pbuh, was keen on respecting and preserving the prestige of Islam before his adversaries, lest any of them

[122] *SaHih Al-Bukhari*, the Book on *the virtues of the Prophet's companions*, in the Section on *the incident involving Osamah ben Zaid.*

should entertain any adverse intentions and encroaches on the Prophet, pbuh, and his followers, when such adversaries feel secure against punishment and hope for forgiveness. It has been said that whoever feels secure against punishment will forget good manners.

Thus, in a case such as this, mercy should make way to justice. It happened once that the Muslims took a man called Abou Izzat Al-Jumahi, prisoner. The man was a poet, who dedicated his poetry to wage a war against the Prophet, pbuh, just as he fought him with his sword in the battle of Badr. The man begged the Prophet to release him after he had given the Prophet his word not to fight him any more. The Prophet, pbuh, took pity on him and released him, out of mercy, without taking a ransom from him, unlike the treatment of other prisoners, who were released after being ransomed.

However, two years later, the same man was taken prisoner in the battle of Hamraa al-Asad, that followed the battle of Uhod. So, he begged the Prophet again to release him once more, but the Prophet refused and said, “You shall never enter Mecca once more and say you have deceived Muhammad twice. A believer will never be bitten twice by the same poisonous snake.” Then he gave orders the man to be executed.

This behavior of the Prophet falls within the scope of mercy and consolidates it in the souls of his companions, as it constitutes a lesson to those who indulge in wishful thinking of being forgiven after committing evil deeds. Thus, when this man lost his life as a result of his awesome deeds, his destiny constituted a mercy for mercy itself, lest it should be misinterpreted and lose its effect.

It must be pointed out that this event was not a rare occurrence, for it was followed by similar events in which the

same motives and circumstances were repeated, thus making it difficult for some people to reconcile them with the forms of phenomena of mercy in the life of the Prophet, pbuh..

In this respect, I would like to quote the analysis of Professor Aqqad, who said, "Among the special characteristics of the greatness of the Prophet, pbuh, is the fact that his fanatic enemies attributed to him two contradictory qualities. Thus, for some, he was too lenient to fight, and for others, he was so cruel as to fight and shed human blood for no reason or cause. But Muhammad, pbuh, was neither this nor that.

Thus, while his courage refutes the suspicion of the leniency of weakness and shameful fear, his whole life, ever since his early childhood, refutes the suspicion of cruelty and hostility. Thus, in all his relations with the members of his family, his wet nurses, companions and wives, he was a paragon of unequalled mercy, even among prophets.[123]

In this context, it is proper to talk of a methodical question connected with the studies by some non-Muslim thinkers, of the biography of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh. When reading their books in this respect, one feels that some of them focus on one aspect of the life of the Prophet, pbuh, whether deliberately or not, in order to portray him to readers as being characterized by this attribute only

This approach, regardless of its motives, is a crime against the truth and fails to respect the minds of readers. It reminds me of the book written by A. Schiller on those who trifle with people's minds.

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[123] Mahmoud Al-Aqqad, *The Genius of Muhammad*, p. 77.

Searching the pages of the biography of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, for evidence of his mercy, forbearance and tolerance, will reveal such evidence in abundance. Also evidence that reveals his strength, firmness and ability to kill his enemies, without responding to their begging to spare their lives, exists in abundance.

But no one will find anything through which to hide one aspect in his biography at the expense of another. May be some of them lack the scientific, methodical or neutral qualifications to refute an illusory contradiction between his two opposite qualities. It was this that has prompted Professor Aqqad to say that greatness, in the eyes of enemies, is perceived as a contradiction.

Allow me, dear audience, to make a short digression in order to consider a matter that is connected with our subject. I refer to the view of the Prophet, pbuh, held by non-Islamic communities in their portrayal of him as cruel , restricting freedom and punishing for sins, unlike Jesus Christ.

I have read in this respect an analysis that is worth quoting, namely, "When the utilitarian thought prevailed among Westerners, adherence to the person of Christ came to represent the culmination of utilitarianism to those who accepted religion. Thus, for such people, Christ has paid for their sins, even before they commit same, and has left them to live and commit whatever acts they wish, since, as long as the love of Christ, as an individual and as a god, dominates their feelings.

As to those who have abandoned Christianity altogether and became atheists, Christ was at the center of their views after the distortion of religion. He was considered him an

individual, and hence he could be different from other human beings.

Moreover, in the picture depicted of Christ by the Western Church, he was portrayed as merciful and isolated from the life of people, admitting all values of human life – as people desire for themselves – advocating nothing but freedom and equality, which are the most important secular values, which do not clash with those who have abandoned religion, and hence, there was no need to clash with Christ.[124]

Now if Christ is characterized by such qualities, then Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, is his very opposite. This is how his adversaries portray him in order to distance people from loving and following him. It is a pity that such illusions have crept into the minds of many in Western communities, particularly after their religious orientation has been weakened.

People with such convictions love those who let them alone to do what they desire, without anyone to control or them or to bring them to account. This is represented by Christ, in their view. Moreover, they are averse to those who require them to assume certain obligations and duties and bring them to account for such requirements. This is how they view Prophet Muhammad, pbuh.

It is a pity to hear such naïve views, which is not proper to advocate for people who respect their own minds. This view is first and foremost harmful to Christ, pbuh., when he is so portrayed to people in such a manner as to deprive him of the attribute of prophethood, of a reformer and of an ardent

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[124] Hisham Juait, *Europe and Islam,* pp62-63, with some adaptation.

educator, making him merely a bridge to their passions and a carrier of their sins.

Allow me to give an example., which is beneath your level. So please forgive me for bringing it up.

Let us suppose that we have two physicians in a community, one who keeps an eye on his patients, informs them frankly regarding their diseases, prescribes sometimes some bitter medication for them, advises them to avoid certain things which they like, and interferes with their private life.

The other physician, if he exists at all, goes along with the desires of his patients, does not prevent them from anything they like to do or does not censure them when he finds that they are doing something that is detrimental to their health and does not reveal to them their actual health condition nor warns them when necessary.

Now, who is more keen on protecting his patients? Which one of them has been faithful to his duty? Which of them earns the respect of people, even at a later stage? Which one is merciful towards the members of his community?

The reply to these questions which I believe no one would dispute reveals the naivety of those illusions, which some who trifle with the minds of people, are advocating.

"I, personally", says Dr. Adam, "believe that fair-minded people, and I do not mean friends only, consider what has been termed as contradiction, a balanced, middle of the way and integral attitude.

The positions of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, which history has recorded, have become an ethical theory, which is not

restricted to any time, place or environment, and history has preserved their privileged status.

Thank you, dear audience, for your attentive listening and see you at the next lecture."

Seventh Lecture
The Merciful War

This is the seventh lecture of Dr. Adam and the audience is the same audience. Comments on these lectures have multiplied in many fora, newspapers and journals, the majority of which were positively appreciative, though some were critical on the grounds that she sometimes goes too far in adducing evidence and in analysis. There was one source only that considered the lectures emotional in character.

There appeared an article in the University Magazine that stated that there was a mixture of emotions and family sentiments, and that these lectures were family meals that are appropriate for all members of the family, but they apparently remain points of view, which were themselves admired by others, particularly those who were previously interested in this topic.

Dr. Adam never made any comments regarding what was said about her lectures. This was remarked by others attending here lectures, who would have liked to hear something from her, but no one wanted to bring up the matter or raise any questions in that regard.

Dr. Adam started her lecture, as usual, by welcoming her audience and then went on to say:

“Other lectures have touched on the relationship that exists among different aspects of ethics, and we have sometimes reported the views of some specialists in the field of ethics,

which views indicated that a human personality cannot highlight a certain ethical trait that would become closely associated with it, unless such personality begins by applying other ethical traits and identifies itself with universal values. We mentioned, in that respect, the view of some scholars who maintained that ethical traits reinforce one another, which confirms the previous view.

I have intended the following lines to be an introduction to this subject. You may remember that someone in the audience had touched on this subject and that I said at the time that it was a basic aspect of our topic and that we would revert to it in some detail.

However, it seems to me that before dealing with this subject and with the illustrations of mercy that are associated therewith, I am compelled to touch on the philosophy of war in the life of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh. I must admit that I do not like to talk about wars. I believe that you share this aversion with me and do not desire to listen to what is connected with wars, whose stinking odors bother all of us, in an age in which hidden thoughts have become foul and people's minds have become blinded.

We have felt depressed as a result of hearing about wars and the horrible scenes of blood and destruction associated therewith, so much so, that we were under the impression that humanity had gone out of its mind, as it did not know why the killer kills and why the victim was killed; why the unjust has perpetrated their injustice, nor how the victim has avenged himself.

Our aversion to war, its news and consequences are among the main reasons that have prompted us to talk about ethics and morality, particularly the ethics of mercy. This is done in order

to remind the erring humanity that there is on earth something that is called mercy, which may in many instances make it possible to dispense with war and hatred, and so that humanity may realize that there is a person in whom mercy was an eminent attribute throughout his life. It was the weapon with which he fought his adversaries in many cases, at a time when they fought him with force and cruelty. It was the means through which he attracted many people to his message and succeeded in spreading mercy among people.

It is inevitable, however, to talk about mercy without touching on war and its disasters. I hope we shall not be misunderstood as being driven by emotion and compelled by our humane feelings to the point of ignoring the conflict between good and evil in this world, or as being oblivious of the causes of such conflict, whether they are convincing and legitimate or not.

I would like to talk about the subject of war in the life of the Prophet, pbuh, in the format of several points, lest we should digress beyond our intended objective, particularly as this subject is so controversial that opinions diverge over it and is subjected to the influence of selfish interests.

First, it has been established that the Prophet, pbuh, has given permission to fight, to his companions, fifteen years after the beginning of his mission. Thus fighting was authorized in the second year of the Hegira, which is the view of the majority of scholars.[125] This means that the years of fighting were only eight years, because the mission of the Prophet, pbuh, lasted twenty three years.

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[125] Dr. Muhammad Bakr Al-Abed, *The Discourse of the Quran in Respect of the Prophet's Battles*, tradition 1, p.43, first impression, Dar Al-Gharb Al-Islami, Beirut.

If we take into account that the culture that prevailed at the time proscribed fighting during the sacred months, which numbered four. ("*The number of months in the sight of God is tywelve months in God's decree on the day when He created the heavens and the earth, ouf of these four are sacred* (Al-Tawbah, 36); and given that this culture was respected by the Muslims and by their adversaries – If we take these facts into account, we must drop from the eight years about three years, which constitute the sum total of the sacred months from each of the eight years. Hence, the total period during which the Prophet, pbuh, was allowed to fight was only five years out of the twenty three years of his mission, as we have said.

Second: The number of battles fought by the Prophet, pbuh. was only nine battles, to which are added limited fighting activities, in which he used to entrust to his companions the performance of specific tasks that did not involve any killing or any fighting.

Several scholars have attempted to count the number of human losses during the time of the Prophet, pbuh, and they reported conflicting figures. The highest figure did not exceed 1048 persons from all parties, but I have ascertained that the number does not exceed hundreds, at most, in eight years, in nine battles, and a number of his minor campaigns.

In the context of adducing figures, it is quite in order to mention the number of people killed during the First and Second World Wars only.

The First World War: or the global war that put an end to all wars, is the one that took place between 1914 and 1918, during which chemical weapons were used, for the first time., and in Which the world had never mobilized such a number of troops as it had done in that War. In that war, civilians were bombed,

from the sky for the first time in history, and racial annihilations were practiced (9 million military personnel, 7 million civilians, totaling 17 million persons.)

The Second World War, which erupted in 1937 in Asia and in 1939 in Europe, and ended in 1945 with the surrender of Japan. This war is considered a universal war and the costliest in the history of humanity on account of the wide expanse of the war and the multiplicity of the theatres of the battles that took place. Many states were involved in the conflict and the War claimed the lives of about 60 million human beings, between military personnel and civilians (25 million military personnel and 37 million civilians).

Yes, my dear audience! Consider the painful figure of 77 million people killed in just two wars, within about 12 years, of whom 44 million were civilians.

But in the age of mercy, in the life time of the Prophet, pbuh, there was almost no civilian casualty, throughout 23 years of the confrontation between the Prophet, pbuh, and his adversaries.

In this context, allow me, after those stunning figures, to reiterate the statement made by Noam Chomsky: "I have taken these figures from history, and one must clamor in protest and announce them in public."[126]

Third: The Prophet has sought to avoid fighting, as much as possible, which the strong with many potentials avoids, as he was aware that his objective had been realized and many successes had been scored, without the need to fight. This is a

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[126] *Ibid., Terrorism and Counter Terrorism,* p.14

fact confirmed by fifteen years that elapsed without any fighting, years that were full of accomplishments.

It would be interesting to illustrate this orientation by adducing what had happened in the Battle of Badr, which was fought by the Prophet, pbuh, against his Meccan adversaries. He had left Medina seeking no fighting, a fact recorded by the Quran, when referring to the Prophet and his companions: "*and you would have liked to seize the less powerful one*" (Al-Anfal, 7). This verse has revealed that the Prophet did not desire to fight, but had been compelled to do so, finding no other alternative, as the Prophet, pbuh, would never run away from his enemy.

Hours before the start of the battle, he had hoped that Quraish would listen to reason and be dissuaded from fighting, as is evidenced by the Prophet's statement to his companions hours before the start of the battle: "If there is any good in one of them, it lies with the owner of the red camel, for if they obey him they would be reasonable."[2], meaning Otbah ben Rabiaa, who had tried to dissuade Quraish from going to war, but did not succeed and was overruled by Abu Jahl and those who were of his opinion.

On occasions, he used to change his routing in order to avoid fighting, as he did when he was on his way, with his companions, to perform *Umrah* (the Small Pilgrimage), and used to send mediators to his adversaries to convince them of the damage and injuries that result from war and of his desire of peace. This happened in the Hudaibiyah Truce.[127]

The Prophet always preferred to conclude treaties with his adversaries and was eager to make same in order to close the

[127] See in this respect, *SaHiH al-Bukhari,* in the Section on the *Conditions of* "jihad" *and Conciliation*, tradition 2731.

door to war. The number of treaties is almost equal to that of his military campaigns. This is only an indication of his keenness on avoiding war.

Fourth: When forced to fight, the Prophet, pbuh, would only fight in self-defense or in defending his territory, even if he took the initiative in the fighting. Thus, whenever he anticipated an imminent danger, or had intelligence of some people preparing to fight him, he would hasten to fight them, in fulfillment of the Quranic orders: "*And fight in God's cause against those who wage war against you, but do not commit aggression, for verily, God does not love aggressor* " (Al-Baqarah, 190).

At this juncture, a lady in the audience raised her hand, and was given the floor. She introduced herself in a soft voice which was not heard. She said she worked in the field of child-care and had an interesting piece of information in this respect, which she desired to share with the audience. Dr. Adam welcomed her offer, and the lady said:

"I have read an article which was read at a seminar on child-care, copy of which I keep at my office. The article said that the Prophet, pbuh, used to prevent children from joining him in battles.

Thus, it happened that when the Prophet, pbuh, was reviewing his army at the Battle of Bdr, he noticed that there were two boys, Abdullah bin Omar and Al-Baraa bin Azib who had joined the army, and he ordered them to go back to Medina[128], although they had tried to stand on their tip toes to give an impression of their being old enough. But their attempt failed,

[128] See *The Biography of the Prophet in the Light of the Quran and the Sunnah*, v.2,p.124. In the battle of UHud, a figure of 15 boys is mentioned, *ibid.*, v.2, tradition 383.

for the Prophet, pbuh, insisted on their going back , though he was not sure there would be a fight. But in case fighting would break out, he wanted to spare the boys the danger of fighting, out of his mercy for them."

The speaker paused and asked if she could continue and Dr. Adam said, "Please do, but give me a minute first, lest I should forget, to say that the Prophet pf Mercy was keen on protecting children as a whole, and not merely the children of Muslims. Thus he firmly ordered Muslims not to kill any children of the enemy. This is illustrated by his order to Khaled bin Al-Walid not to kill a child, a woman or a servant.[129]"

The lady went on to say, "In contrast to that, the UNICEF has published the figure of 300 thousand children recruited in armies and participating in battles.[130]"

She went on to say, "You have mentioned in the First Lecture that the Non-Governmental Organization "Medecins sans frontiers" has reported that 2 million children were killed in the past few years, in wars and conflicts.

This encourages me to propose that in addition to the points you have mentioned that a pointe be added on the eagerness of the Prophet, pbuh, to keep away civilians, children and women from the wars, and this explains why there were no civilian casualties in the wars he fought."

Dr. Adam listened with great interest to the intervention of the speaker and invited her to come forward to the podium and repeat her magnificent statements, which she considered to

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[129] Ibn Hisham, *The Biography of the Prophet*, v.4, p.100.
[130] Muhammad Sadeq Makki, *Figures Describing the World*, p. 244, first impression, 2006, Riyadh.

form an important part of her lecture, and that they would be added thereto.

The speaker hesitated and wished to be excused, but Dr. Adam insisted, for a good reason, saying, “the majority of the audience did not hear your interesting speech. Hence it is necessary that you respond to the invitation so that all would benefit therefrom. I have decided that your statements would constitute the fifth point.” The speaker stepped forward feeling a bit shy and repeated what she had said to the audience, who expressed admiration and appreciation.

When she finished, Dr. Adam thanked her once more, on her own behalf and on behalf of the audience. Thereafter, another person in the audience stood up and said that it seemed that the situation encouraged him to make a brief intervention, which he thought was interesting and would show how eager the Prophet, pbuh, was to protect children from all harm. Dr. Srah thanked him and invited him to go ahead. He said, “Ibn Malek has reported that the Prophet, pbuh, told parents to call home their children after sunset.[131] I gather from this advice that the Prophet ,pbuh, wanted children to be at home before the advent of darkness, as it is associated with possible harm to children.

I believe that this is an indication of the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, towards children, which we hope would be observed by parents in our time, and thank you for giving me this opportunity.”

[131] Reported by Abu Dawood in his *Sunan*, tradition No. 2604 and admitted by Al-Albani. See *the Series*, v.7, v.14338.

Dr. Adam thanked the speaker for this interesting and significant piece of information and his request that it be included in the lecture and went on to say:

"I remember two other events, which are relevant to our subject.

The first: we have already touched on it. It is the story of the first woman martyr in Islam, Sumayyah bint (daughter) of Khabat, whom the enemies of the Prophet, pbuh, did not hesitate to kill, while in contrast, when the Prophet, pbuh, saw one of his enemies' women killed, he was angry and ordered his companions not to kill women.

During the Battle of Hunain, the Prophet, pbuh, saw a woman who had been killed and was surrounded by onlookers. He was told she had been killed by Khalwed bin Al-Walid. The Prophet, pbuh, said that she was not participating in the fighting and sent some of his companions to tell Khaled Ibn Walid that the Prophet ordered him not to kill a child, a woman or a servant."

At this point a person in the audience said, "I have read that women used to go out with the Prophet during his battles. Is this true? If so, how can we reconcile this with what you have just said?"

She said, "this is true. I have read some texts that so indicate, and I read about the attitude of the Prophet, pbuh, towards women. But what we should know is that women remained behind the army, tending to the wounds of the fighters and providing the men with water. They were far from the field of battle, which is an indication of the esteem given to them when they were given the opportunity to offer their services. Having

them stay far from the fighting is by way of mercy towards them.

I would like, dear Audience, to revert for a while to the refusal by the Prophet, bpuh, to permit the two boys to accompany him to the field of battle. For no one should wonder when seeing this picture of compassion of the Prophet, pbuh, towards children.

Another indication of his mercy is the fact that he used to prolong his prostration in prayer in order not disturb a child who has mounted his back, lest he should fall. This child was the son of his daughter, Fatimah[132]

The second: The Prophet's companions saw him carrying Omamah, the daughter of his daughter Zainab. When prostrating, he would place her gently on the floor, and rising he would carry her again. He probably did this lest she should fall off his back, out of pity and mercy towards her. Now is it conceivable that he who behaves like this with children, would allow them to accompany him to his battles?

Dear audience,

This merciful Prophet, pbuh., could not stand the sight of a bird being deprived of its chicks and ordered his companions to return them to the mother, as we have seen. It is inconceivable that he should see a human mother lose her child and therefore he told the two boys to go back home, as we have seen.

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[132] Ibn Hisham, *The Biography of the Prophet*, v.4, p.100; Akram Alomary, *The True Biography of the Prophet*, v.2, p.503

Permit me to make an urgent appeal, in your name and mine, and a sheer advice, to the whole of humanity, to search for Muhammad, pbuh. Now, if they do not find him in person, they will definitely find him through his noble and transcendent principles, which humanity needs today as never before.

Thus, his behavior indicates that he was not fighting individuals, but was fighting an authority which, if left alone, would constitute a threat to Islam and its people, and hence, it was necessary to remove it from the way in order to give individuals the chance to make their own choice, without being affected by external forces.

Professor Aqqad says, "Islam is criticized on the grounds that it had fought, with the sword, an idea that may be fought on the basis of reason and proof. But he is not criticized for fighting with the sword an authority that stands in his way and prevent him from addressing those who are willing to listen to him, as an authority is removed only by another authority, and subduing it by force is something inevitable."[133]

Dr. Adam went on to say, "At a previous lecture it was maintained that principles needed force to preserve them in many contexts, not in order to force them on people, but in order to protect them and remove obstacles from their way.

The West has not adhered to the principle it had laid down, namely, he who hits you on your right cheek, turn the other for him. Throughout history, many wars have erupted in the name of Christ, of which he is absolutely innocent, which wars claimed the lives of millions of people. No one can deny these

[133] Al-Aqqd, *The Genius of Muhammad*, p.45.

painful facts, and I do not wish to dwell too long on this issue."

Sixth: The Prophet, pbuh, had a special way of preparing his army for confronting his adversaries. Thus he never obliged anyone to go out to fight, and used to exempt those who expressed personal reasons, to the point that God Almighty reproached him for that, "*May God pardon thee; why did thou grant them permission ere it had become obvious to thee as to who was speaking the truth and ere thou camest to know who were the liars?*" (Al-Tawbah, 43) I seems that the Prophet, pbuh, was too ready to accept excuses. Hence, reproach came to reveal the sincere excuses and to expose the false ones.

This attitude does not contradict his desire for his companions to accompany him in his campaigns, while they themselves were only too eager to join him, to the point that a quarrel would sometimes erupt between son and father as to which of them shall join the Prophet, pbuh. This was the case with Saad bin Khaithamah and his father in the Battle of Badr[134], and between Abi Umamah and his uncle, over which of them shall stay with Abi Umamah's sick mother, as we have already seen.

Going to war voluntarily is different from fighting on compulsion without any regard for special circumstances. This is being practiced by civilized armies these days, where soldiers are sent to the battle field, in spite of their will.

This was clearly illustrated when the Prophet, pbuh, told one of his commanders, Abdullah bin Jahsh, not to compel anyone to fight if he does not wish to join the fighting. Thus in a message sent to him, he said , "Go forth, with God's blessings,

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[134] Al-Saklabi, *The Biography of the Prophet*, v.1, p.54.

until you reach Nakhla, and do not force any of your companions to go with you."[135]

The Prophet, pbuh, used to give permission to certain individuals not to go with him and to stay behind for personal reasons, some of which we have already mentioned, and sometimes he would ask some of them to stat behind, as when he asked Othman bin Affan to stay behind on account of his wife's illness[136], and gave permission to Abu Umamah to stay behind and look after his sick mother. There are many similar cases.

When such cases are combined together, they constitute strong evidence that the Prophet, pbuh, was not keen on fighting and that it was not a goal he sought to attain. He has never been thirsty for fighting or killing. He has never forgotten that he was sent as a mercy to mankind, and that he would use mercy more than he used arms to confront his adversaries in some fields, as did happen in fact.

The view of the ethics scholars that "morality is the art of controlling one's desires" is clearly reflected in the fighting philosophy of Muhammad, pbuh. He is in sharp contrast, in this respect, with so many great leaders that humanity has witnessed, such Alexander the Macedonian, Hulago, Napoleon, Hitler and others.

All those have fought people who had nothing to do or had no enmity with those leaders in the first place. However, the mundane motives, such as fame and general and private interests, have prompted those leaders to enter territory that was not theirs and fight innocent people who were not their

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[135] Al-Aqqad, *The Genius of Muhammad*, p.60
[136] See SaHiH Al-Bukhari , in the Section on the *Traits of Othman*, tradition No.3698

adversaries. They killed hundreds of thousands and destroyed hundreds of cities, and the sum of all this was killing, destruction and instability.

On the other hand, the Prophet, pbuh, has fought those who fought him and his followers, those who had eradicated them from their land and had taken their possessions. Thus, he had the right to do that under all laws, and yet he never did anything that indicates that he had any passion for killing or that he was seeking to attain fame in this field.

Both Christ and Muhammad, peace be upon both of them, have preached mercy, tolerance and good deeds. But Christ was not able to propagate what he was preaching or to realize it in actual fact as he would have liked to do. This was because he had not found the necessary force that protects mercy and makes way for it to reach all people, on account of the hostility of the Jews and the existence of a Roman cruel authority.

But Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, did find this force with which he removed the obstacles that stood in the face of the spreading of those sublime principles. Thus the resort of the Prophet, pbuh, to force in some cases was evidence of his eagerness to spread the culture of mercy, tolerance, justice and good deeds. Otherwise, he could have preached such ethics, as did his great predecessors, and then leave people alone to choose or not to adopt such ethics or to turn away from them and do the very opposite.

But the Prophet of Mercy, who was sent as a mercy to mankind, could not have done that because humanity would be the victim that would pay a high price. The Prophet's fighting was a mercy, so that mercy would prevail among people without any obstacles or barriers.

Dear audience,

I have gathered lots of information while preparing these lectures, which I keep separately and I often feel inclined to share them with you, because they reveal an aspect of fairness in the studies made about those who have written about Muhammad, pbuh, other than his followers, and I find this interesting to reveal. They, frankly, inspire a large amount of confidence in many of the listeners. Therefore, allow me to read to you what eminent scholars have to say on our subject, and I apologize in advance if I have already mentioned some of them at previous lectures.

The Spanish orientalist, Jean Lake, says, "Muhammad's life cannot be described in a way that is better than God's description in the Quran, '*And we sent thee as evidence of Our mercy towards the worlds*.' (Al-Anbiyaa, 107). Muhammad was a real mercy.[137]

The English philosopher Thomas Carlyle says, "Muhammad, that great man, who was full of mercy, good and tenderness, had ideas other than mundane greed and intentions, other than the quest for authority and prestige."[138]

Carlyle also says, "The severe wars he fought against the Bedouin Arabs were not devoid of scenes of force; but neither were they devoid of indications of mercy, generosity and forgiveness. Muhammad did not apologize for the first, nor did he boast about the second."[139]

Commenting on the treatment by the Prophet, pbuh, of the prisoners of the battle of Badr, the thinker, Lord Hudley, says,

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[137] Al-Husseinin, *The Messenger in Fair Western Eyes*, p.88.
[138] *Ibid.*, p.142.
[139] *Ibid.*, p.190.

"Is not this evidence that Muhammad was not characterized by cruelty or thirst for blood, as his adversaries allege; he rather always sought to avoid the shedding of blood, as much as possible."[140]

The Great German scholar, Bertley Saint Hiller, says, "The Prophet preached the religion of one God. In his preaching, he was gentle and merciful, even with his enemies. His personality is characterized by two of the most sublime qualities that characterize a human being, namely, justice and mercy."[141]

Dear audience, we are still on the subject of the Prophet's mercy in all its aspects, but in another sphere, when his followers have multiplied, and his strength has grown and his victories have come in succession. In such circumstances, dazzling pictures of mercy were drawn in the Prophet's attitude towards his enemies, which won great admiration and astonishment, perhaps.

I must admit that among the reasons for my pursuit of this subject, and my eagerness to consider these events, is what some Western writers have written, that Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, was a tolerant prophet when he was in Mecca, but when he went to Medina, he became a ruler and a head of state, acting like leaders do.[142]

Allow me to take you back to Mecca, when Quraish isolated the Prophet, pbuh, his followers and relatives in a valley called the valley of Abu Taleb for three years, during which they were denied food and contact with them to the point that they nearly died together with their women and children, some of

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[140] *Ibid.,* p.104.
[141] *Ibid.,* p,183.
[142] Al-Sheibani, *The Messenger in the Eyes of Fair Orientalists*, p.292.

them had perhaps been driven by hunger to eat insects and worms.[143]

Days went by and the Prophet migrated to Medina and established a strong state that had great prestige and status. At this time, Thumamah bin Athal, the leader of Bani Hanifah of Najd, embraced Islam and unilaterally decided to support the position of the Prophet, pbuh, and weaken his weak enemies in Mecca, by stopping the export of wheat to Mecca, which is known to be a non-agricultural land.

People in Mecca were terror stricken when they were confronted with the ghost of hunger. So they wrote to the Prophet, pbuh, and sent a delegation to beg him to intercede with Thumamah to resume exporting wheat to them.

People in Mecca knew that the Prophet, pbuh, was never of a cruel heart or ill tempered. Therefore, they appealed to him, despite their antagonism towards him.

It was as though the Prophet, pbuh, remembered the past years when he and his followers and relatives had been besieged , and his relatives were among those who begged him to intervene, reminding him of the family ties between them, which ties had been absent when they besieged him together with those who were with him. The Prophet's mercy moved him to write to Thumamah to resume exporting wheat to Quraish.

The Prophet, pbuh, could have retaliated in kind and could have left them to suffer hunger, particularly in view of the fact that he had nothing to do with the matter of the ban on export. He was not the one who had ordered the siege and Thumamah

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[143] Dr. Mahdi Rizqallah, *The Biography of the Prophet,* pp.217 ff.

had acted on his own initiative without consulting the Prophet, pbuh, when he decided to stop exporting wheat to them.

The Prophet's mercy did not allow him to deal with Quraish on the basis of reciprocity. Thus the scene was repeated when Quraish had faced severe drought that nearly caused them to die of hunger. So, they sent a delegation begging the Prophet, pbuh, to pray to God to lift this drought that had befallen them.

Thus, the Prophet, pbuh, responded to their plea and prayed to God for lifting the drought. His prayer was answered and the great mishap was lifted.[144]

In the face of the begging of Quraish, one experiences a feeling of astonishment that is mixed with irony towards Quraish. May be one may laugh; for the Prophet's adversaries now admit that he is merciful and witness the effects of his mercy. They realize that the Prophet, pbuh, offers mercy on all occasions, and therefore they came begging him to seek to lift the ghost of hunger from them, their women and children, through his prayers and his interceding for them with Thumamah.

They were sure he would respond to their pleas, which he did; and yet they maintained their hostility towards him. Here, I would like to remind you again of Professor Aqqad's statement that people had the audacity to dare to approach greatness despite the fact that they were in need of it. [145]

The Prophet, pbuh, has acted mercifully in an environment that lacks such quality, but he succeeded in benefiting from it in solving his problems with his adversaries. I am sorry to say,

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[144] *Tabari's Exegesis,* v.9, p.235; Al-Baghawi, *Features of the Revelation,* v.1, p.425.
[145] Al-Aqqad, *The Genius of Muhammad*, p.13

dear audience, that such mercy is still lacking in contemporary environments. There are those who preclude people from exercising, experiencing and feeling happy in the exercising of it, when those who trifle with people's minds and play on their emotions claim that the interests of those people is realized only through killing and destruction, and that their security is jeopardized unless they indulge in indiscriminate killing and destruction.

Is it not possible for those who are endowed with wealth and strength to solve their problems, if any, through love and mercy, in which case the strong will feel happy when exercising mercy and the weak will feel happy when benefiting from its benign effects?

The Prophet, pbuh, has provided examples for humanity, the exercising of which would result in great happiness.

In this context, I remember a beautiful statement by Descartes to the effect that noble persons are masters of their anger and the haughty are slaves of their desires.[146] No more noble behavior is there than to see mercy guiding the attitudes of the Prophet, pbuh, towards his enemies ! How true is the statement of ethics scholars who say that mercy is not merely a word or feeling that a person feels, but is a form of behavior and a reality that has an objective corollary.[147]

Days passed by, but Quraish did not benefit from the attitudes of the Prophet, pbuh. Thus in the Hudaibiyah Truce between the Prophet and Quraish, the latter have stipulated a hard term, which the Muslims felt that insulting.

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[146] Descartes, *The Emotions of the Soul*, pp.98-99.
[147] Dr. Draz, *The Constitution of Ethics*, p.213.

Quraish has stipulated that if any one from Mecca adopts Islam and goes over to Medina to join the Prophet, pbuh, the Prophet, pbuh, should return him to his folks in Mecca, while the opposite will not be the case. Nevertheless, the Prophetm pbuh, agreed to this hard to bear condition.

Then a number of young men from Mecca, whi included Abu Baseer, adopted Islam and joined the Prophet, pbuh, in Medina, whereupon Quraish demanded that they be returned to them, and the Prophet, pbuh, asked them to leave Medina, in fulfillment of the terms of the Truce.

Those young men, who had accepted Islam, left Medina but did not return to Mecca. There were less than a hundred of them and they gathered together in a place between Mecca and Medina called *Al-Ais* and began to intercept the trade caravans of Quraish that were heading towards Syria, killing the men accompanying the caravans and taking their goods. These events almost paralyzed the trade of the people of Mecca, who felt that they were in an unenviable position.

Once more, the people of Mecca sent a delegation begging the Prophet, pbuh, to have mercy on them and to require those young men to join him in Medina. So, the Prophet's adversaries announced in public that they had revoked their insulting condition. The Prophet, pbuh, responded to their request, felt pity for them, and asked the group of young men to leave their position and joinh him in Medina.[148]

Quraish has confronted the Prophet, pbuh, and his companions with their arrogance and arbitrary conditions, but the result was their defeat and their coming to him in utter humiliation.

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[148] See *SaHih Al-Bukhari, the Book of Terms*, tradition No. 4732. See also *The Biography of the Prophet: Lessons and Examples*, v.2, pp.473 ff.

But the Prophet, pbuh, responded with mercy when he felt that their livelihood was threatened on account of the paralysis of their trade, and asked the young men not to harass them any more.

Dear audience,

Is it not the case that Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, has fought his enemies with mercy and was victorious in many instances through his mercy? He has fought them by being magnanimous towards them rather than treating them on the basis of reciprocity of enmity. This exercise of mercy has encouraged them to embrace Islam. Thus, Al-Hareth bin Hisham, says, on the day of the conquest of Mecca, that he tried to hide from the Prophet, pbuh, as he felt ashamed of his previous enmity towards him. But then he remembered the Prophet's generosity and mercy and went to him and proclaimed his conversion to Islam, which made the Prophet, pbuh, very happy.[149]

Another famous episode clearly illustrates what I have said. It took place eight years after the Prophet, pbuh, and his companions were forced to leave Mecca on account of Quraish persecution of them, without anyone of them being able to carry with him any property.

There is a moving description of them in the Quran, "(*Part of these gains shall be given) to the poor among those who have forsaken the domain of evil, those who have been driven from their homelands and from their possessions, seeking favor from God and (His) goodly acceptance and who aid (the cause of) God and of His Apostle: it is they, they who are true to their word.* (Al-Hashr, 8)

[149] See Al-Hakem, *Al-Mustadrak*, v.3, p.277.

After eight years, the Prophet, pbuh, returned to Mecca with ten thousand of his companions who were fully armed, and entered it with nothing on his mind except mercy. On his way to Mecca, he was told that one of his military commanders, Saad bin Obadah, said that that was the day of carnage and the lawful practice of what was forbidden. But the Prophet, pbuh, said instead that that day was the day of mercy and removed him from command and replaced him with his son, Qais bin Saad, [150].

Dear audience,

You may have wondered, in the face of this wise and merciful step, why he has replaced Saad with his son. Had he replaced him with someone other than his son, he would have felt unhappy and sad. But for him to be replaced by his son must have pleased him, as both father and son would be satisfied. So this step was an act of mercy for both of them, just as it was for all the people of Mecca. It is the simple and crucial mercy that is exercised in all situations.

The Prophet entered Mecca and found its people gathered round the Kaaba awaiting their destiny, wondering what the Prophet, pbuh, would do to them, given that they had hurt him, driven him out and killed persons who were the dearest to his heart. Addressing them, the Prophet, pbuh, said, "What do you expect me to do to you?" They said, "what is good, as you are a magnanimous brother and the nephew of a magnanimous brother," to which he replied, "Go forth, you are free. There is no blame on you today, May God forgive you." [151]

[150] Dr. Akran Anbari, *The True Biography of the Prophet*, v.2, p.477.
[27] See Dr. Mahdi Rizqallah, *The Biography of the Prophet*, p.179. See also Dr. Al-Omari, *The Medina Society*, p.179
[28] Dr. Al-Hofi, *Ibid, The Character of the Prophet*, p.40.

I remember in this context something I read which was written by certain Western philosophers like Hobbes and Nietzsche, who based morality on the pillars of force. They consider mercy a good thing, because it is an indication of the strength of a person, who exercises mercy towards those who are weaker than him, and is evidence of his disdain to confront the weak as he would confront his strong counterparts.[152]

If such persons have read the biography of the Prophet, pbuh, they probably would have rephrased this theory because they would have seen that the Prophet, pbuh, used to confront both the strong counterparts and the weak with mercy. This was evident on many occasions, which we have seen, but which is difficult for many people to appreciate, as it is an unusual attitude in the life of the majority of great men.

It was mercy and no other that has prevailed, the mercy that has encompassed all the people of Mecca, with the exception of six or seven, whose killing the Prophet, pbuh, proclaimed to be lawful, in view of their great hostility to the Prophet, pbuh, and to Muslims. But he pardoned most of them when some of his companions interceded on their behalf.

The American writer and historian Washington Irving – who is among the foremost Americans who were interested in the Arab civilization and its history – has followed the events of the Prophet's entry into Mecca and was greatly impressed by the Prophet's forgiveness of his bitter adversaries, saying, "The behavior of the Messenger of God after his entering Mecca is an indication that he was a Prophet sent to guide humanity, not a victorious leader. For he has shown mercy and

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[29] Washington, *Ibid,* "*The Life of Muhammad,* p.233.

pity towards his fellow citizens, although he had acquired a strong position: he has crowned his victory with mercy and forgiveness.[153]

Dear audience,

I have realized that there is a strong motive behind all this mercy, other than what has already been said, namely, the motive of love. I have come to the conclusion that the Prophet, pbuh, was motivated by his love for all God's creatures, believers, unbelievers, animals and birds.

True love performs miracles. The Prophet's love for his companions goes without saying. But his love for unbelievers was attested in the Quran, in God's addressing His Messenger, as follows: "*Would thou, perhaps torment thyself to death, because they refuse to believe*" (Al-Shu'araa, 3), i.e. it is as though you wanted to destroy yourself as a result of your great sadness and sorrow because the unbelievers refused to see the truth.

He was very sad and felt so pitiful for those people because he knew what would become of them if they died without seeing the truth, and therefore God said to him: "*Hence, do not waste thyself in sorrowing over them. Verily,God has full knowledge of all that they do*" (Fater, 8), i.e. have pity on yourself, Muhammad, you have done your duty to the utmost.

I wish my dear audience would look for love in all the various circumstances of the Prophet, pbuh, which we have considered and I am sure you will clearly see it.

On the other hand, hatred only serves to destroy humanity, and I leave it to you to consider some of the attitudes of some great men and war mongers, past and present.

I wonder if you will find in them indications of love or those of hatred.

In these historical hours, and despite the succession of events, the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, was shown towards one of his close companions, Bilal bin Rabah, a slave in Mecca who was tortured by being made to lie on the burning heat of the sun, on account of his faith, while he kept reiterating: (God is) one, (God is) one, (god is) one. The Prophet felt mercy towards him and remembered his previous suffering, as he entered Mecca and asked Bilal to climb to the top of the Kaaba and call for prayer.

On top of the Kaaba, Bilal raises his voice calling for prayer repeating the attestation to the oneness of God, for which he had been tortured. That was a gesture of honor for Bilal and recognition of his devotion in a society that was so cruel and severe on him.

If the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, towards Bilal, provokes our admiration, his mercy towards Abu Sufian provokes our astonishment, for the latter was hostile towards the Prophet, pbuh, ever since the Prophet, pbuh, began to preach his message of the Quran. Moreover, Abu Sufian was the military leader of Quraish in their wars against the Prophet, pbuh, and his companions. But when Abu Sufian came to the Prophet before he entered Mecca, the Prophet, pbuh, conferred on him certain face-saving privileges out of his mercy towards him.

Thus, the Prophet, pbuh, proclaimed to the people of Mecca that whoever entered the house of Abu Sufian shall be safe[154]. This had a great effect on Abu Sufian and was a merciful face-saving measure before the people of Mecca, as those hours were the beginning of the end of Abu Sufian's leadership.

The Prophet, pbuh, had felt that Abu Sufian needed sympathy and mercy on that occasion and he gave them to him. It is quite probable that this merciful attitude of the Prophet, pbuh, towards Abu Sufian, has contributed to the latter's embracing of Islam and the progress he made together with his family in Islam.

Dear audience,

There occurred an event that is worth mentioning after the Prophet's victory in Mecca, which confirms what we have said about the Prophet's mercy. Thus the great victories achieved by the Prophet, pbuh, did not prompt him to try to achieve more victories and to eradicate any force that was still ahead, at any price. Neither was he to exploit his companion's love of him, nor their desire to fight in order to achieve prestige or to settle a battle.

Thus, the Prophet, pbuh, and his companions had besieged, for a period of time, Taef, which had unconquerable strongholds, and many Muslims were wounded at its walls. So the Prophet, pbuh, had mercy on them and ordered the army to lift the siege and leave. This disappointed his people because they were told to leave Taef before capturing it.

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[154] See Al-Omari, *The True Biography of the Prophet*, v.2, p.479.

The Prophet, pbuh, wanted them to realize that he had taken this decision only out of mercy for them. So he told them to resume the fighting, which they did and many of them were wounded. Thereupon, the Prophet, pbuh, told them that they were leaving the next day, and they were pleased to comply and began to leave, while the Prophet, pbuh, was laughing. However, they asked the Prophet, pbuh, to curse the people of Taef, Thaqif, but the Prophet prayed that God would guide Thaqif and bring them to him.[155]

Mercy had a great effect on changing the course of events. This is because the campaign took place after the opening of Mecca, after the Prophet, pbuh, was in full control. It was to be expected, from a military point of view, that the Prophet, pbuh, should insist on defeating Thaqif, regardless of the number of losses, for it is not conceivable that he should win the battle of the capital, Mecca, in which all of Quraish had surrendered, and reach the gates of Taef, without being able to capture it, and that the tribe of Thaqif should be beyond his control.

However, the Prophet, pbuh, was moved by mercy for his followers on account of the wounds they had sustained in their siege of Taef and disregarded their desire to fight. They had their own calculations and the Prophet had his own, namely his mercy for them, as well as mercy for the people of Taef.

He had expected that they would surrender and embrace Islam. It was only a matter of time. So why fight and suffer the killing on both sides. So mercy, in this context, was preferable. In point of fact, the expectations of the Prophet, pbuh, came true, for the people of Taef soon came and voluntarily

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[155] *Zad al-Miáad fi hadyi khar al- íbad,* v.3/497, SaHiH Muslim, the Book on Jihad and Going to war, ther Section on *the Canpaign against Taef*, tradition 4620, *The True Biography of the Prophet,* v.2, p.511.

surrendered to him and embraced Islam, and God spared both sides from the evil of further fighting.

This, my dear audience, is a rapid round on the cases of war and fighting in the life of the Prophet, pbuh, and I believe that they carry messages of clemency to all people.

The first message is that dialogue and mercy should come first, and that war should be the last resort, as the Prophet of Mercy, has done.

The second message is that if war is inevitable, let it be a merciful one, as were the Prophet's wars, in which women and children, and even some who happen to be involved therein, were their fuel, and let its victims be limited as much as possible.

The third message is that war should be a means to bring people together and remove obstacles, as were the wars of the Prophet, pbuh, and not a means to increase division and spread hatred, and not a cause for more wars, whose results are not predictable.

I hope humanity would read these messages, for there is a dire need for them, as the present indicates.

Although each of the events we have considered seemed to be isolated or ephemeral, they are, nevertheless, cases of the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, towards humanity. By bringing such attitudes before humanity, and making them binding on his followers, he has laid down a general policy for all humanity, a policy that aims at realizing cooperation and closeness among people.

The Prophet, pbuh, has succeeded in realizing these objectives and his followers succeeded in their compliance therewith and in practicing them.

It is an invitation to all humanity to contemplate same in the hope that they prove beneficial to all human beings, as they are global lighthouses that are not limited by time or place and are not the property of a certain environment or a certain race.

The Eighth Lecture
We have not sent thee but as a mercy to all the worlds

The audience are getting ready for the Eighth Lecture. I hear their talking about how quickly the lectures have gone by. Meanwhile Dr. Adam entered the room, welcomed the audience and greeted them.

I believe it is time, in this eighth lecture, to consider a verse from the Holy Quran , namely, "*We have not sent thee but as a mercy to all the worlds*" (Al-Anbiyaa, 107). I have deliberately postponed discussing it till after the interesting humane round which we have been through together, contemplating the merciful manifestations of the Prophet, pbuh, in his dealing with all the categories of people he came in contact with, be they friends, enemies, young or old, male or female, animal or bird.

Those attitudes and pictures immediately invoke in our minds the above Quranic verse, the meaning of which I propose to review with you, as expounded by various scholars, particularly as I have deliberately read a great deal on it and have realized that there are several points of view regarding its meaning.

I have found that some of them confine his mercy to his followers, in particular, and say that it refers to the believers only, and that this is clearly evident in the actual facts: he fought those who denied his message and they fought him have died as infidels.[156]

Others are of the opinion that the Prophet, pbuh, was a mercy and guidance in himself. Those who adopted it have benefited therefrom, and those who turned away from him have not benefited from this mercy.[157]

It is as though we say that this physician is skilful and is a mercy to the people of this town. Thus, those who recognize him, trust him and go to him will benefit from his knowledge, in which case the physician would be a mercy for them, and those who turned away from him and ignored him would not benefit from his mercy.

The majority of those whose writings I have read regarding the meaning of this verse are of the opinion[158] that it was general and applied to all the creatures to which the term "world" applies, though some of them have restricted the meaning of the term to mankind. However, the consensus is that it applies to all living creatures. This is the reasonable meaning,

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[156] Al-Tabari, *Jame' al-Bayan 'an ta'weel Al-Qur'an,*
[157] See Ibn Atiyyah, *Al-Muharrar Al-wajeez*, pp.1296-1297.
[158] See the Exegesis of Al-Tabari, v.17, p.106; see also *Al-TaHreer wat Tanweer*, v.17, p.167.

which is attested by the manifestations referred to above, many of which I hope you will remember.

However, I must admit that it is not enough to shed light on the manifestations of mercy for all creatures, which prompts us to expand a bit on the subject. Therefore, I apologize and request you to be patient and I promise to be as concise as possible.

The verse in question indicates that there is a kind of inseparable correlation and conjunction between the person of the Prophet, pbuh, and the trait of mercy, in any and all cases. This meaning is consistent with the reference of the verse to all creatures, because, in his daily life, the Prophet did not deal exclusively with the believers, nor with people only.

It is not difficult to refer to the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, towards the believers, as its manifestations are varied and numerous, and their occurrences are innumerable, whether in the field of legislation and the associated leniency and appreciation of the circumstances, or in the field of the social and personal relations, which are so many that they evoke in the minds of all those who accompanied the Prophet, pbuh – and there were thousands of them – a particular circumstance, a pleasant memory or an affable dialogue. In fact, the books on the Prophet's traditions provide us with many of those instances.

Now we come, dear audience, to the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, towards the unbelievers, which I propose to mention to you in the form of brief points lest I should lose your attention.

The first aspect: The presence of the Prophet, pbuh, in their midst has precluded the sending down of the punishment of eradication, as happened to some nations before them, such as the peoples of Aad, Thamood, and Lot. This aspect is explicitly mentioned in the Quran: "*But God did not choose thus to chastise them while thou wert still among them*" (Al-Anfal, 33). This is an incomparable mercy, which the unbelievers have benefited from.

The second aspect: The Prophet, pbuh, strongly refused to invoke God's punishment on them. Had he done so, God would have responded to his invocation, just as He has responded to the invocation of other prophets, against their people such as the invocation of Noah, "*And Noah said, 'O, my Lord, leave not on earth any of those who deny the truth'*" (Noah, 6) and drowned all of them, except only a few who were with Noah in the Ark.

The companions of the Prophet, bpuh, have asked him to invoke God's imprecation on the unbelievers of Mecca in the battle of Uhod, saying, ""O, Messenger of God, invoke God's imprecation on the idolaters,"

but he said, “I am not sent to curse people, I am sent as a mercy.”[159]

This took place at the Battle Of Uhod, in which the Prophet, pbuh, was badly wounded, and some of his closest friends were killed. And yet, he refused to curse them. The same scene was repeated at the Battle of Hunain and when the Muslims were harmed by Thaqif and they asked the Prophet, pbuh, to curse them, but he surprised them when he said, “O God, forgive Thaqif, and prayed for them not against them.”[160]

The third aspect: The Prophet, pbuh, did not treat them on a reciprocal basis, as we have seen in details. They had tortured him and his companions, but he did not torture them. They imposed against him and his companions the policy of starvation but he did not reciprocate. They forced him to leave Mecca but he did not do the same. They killed his prisoner companions but he forgave their own.

The fourth aspect: The Prophet, pbuh, had done his best to avoid clashing with them. He had forbidden his companions to fight against them for thirteen years, and when he did fight them, he was keen on ending the conflict speedily. Proof of this is the paucity of the

[159] SaHih Muslim, the Section on *the absuse of animals and others*, tradition 6613.
[160] Reported by Tirmidhi, in the Section on *Thaqif and Bani Hanifah*, tradition 3942.

battles between them, as well as the small number of casualties.

The effect of this exercise of mercy was evident in the successive conversion to Islam of thousands of unbelievers, and all the people of Mecca embraced Islam when he captured Mecca.

The fifth aspect: The appreciation of all the unbelievers of the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, and his pity on them, as evidenced by the way he treated them. You will remember what happened when they came to ask for his assistance in matters of livelihood, although they had rejected his message and had been hostile to him.

The third category was the hypocrites.

The hypocrites were a category of people who were living in Medina with the Prophet, pbuh. They pretended to believe in his message but hanged on their disbelief inwardly. They adopted this strategy as they had seen how he treated people on the basis of their surface behavior and pretensions and how he left what they hid to God; so they adopted this mean strategy.

This is not the time or place to dwell on the dangers which were faced by the Prophet, pbuh, and his companions on account of the hypocrites.

Let me just refer in brief to the attempt by Abdullah bin Salool, the leader of those hypocrites, to defame the honor of the Prophet, pbuh, by accusing the Prophet's wife, Aisha, who was his beloved spouse, of committing adultery. This accusation resulted in a revelation that showed the lie of this slander and proved the innocence of Aisha: "*Numerous among you are those who would accuse others of unchastity; deem it not a bad thing for you ;nay , it is a good thing for you*" (Al-Noor, 11).

Other damage affecting the Muslims was the withdrawal of Abdullah bin Salool with a third of the army at the Battle of Uhod, which had a bad effect on the souls of the Muslims. Such damage was also the result of the collaboration of the hypocrites with the enemies of the Prophet, pbuh, on every occasion.[161]

The Prophet, pbuh, has shown mercy to those people, despite their enmity and the danger they represented, in the foremost[162] of whom was Abdullah bin Salool, the Prophet's staunchest enemy. Following are some of such instances:

The first instance: the Prophet, pbuh, did not expose them to the public, although he knew their names, God

[161] For details of all this, see Dr. Adel Al-Shadi, *the Book on hypocrisy and its effect on the Life of the Nation. A Quranic Study,* p.360ff

[162] See Al-Zamakhshari, *Al-Kashaf*, v.1, p.491; A-Alosi, *The Spirit of Meanings, v.10, p.127.*

having informed him of them, but he concealed their identity, which is a striking indication of his mercy towards them, and of his mercy towards their sincere relatives, in order to spare such relatives from embarrassment.

The second instance: He did not kill any of them, although they deserved to be killed, because they constituted a more serious danger for him than that of the remote unbelievers. So he left them alone and treated them as Muslims.

The third instance: The Prophet, pbuh, used to reprimand the hypocrites without specifying any of them. He merely warned against the evil of hypocrisy and read the Quranic verses that warn hypocrites against the grievous torture that awaits them. This approach has been successful, for many of them abandoned hypocrisy and became good Muslims. Thus, concealing their identity and refraining from killing them out of mercy for them, made them reconsider their position, repent and they became good Muslims.

I should mention in all honesty, and out of respect to the audience, that some scholars have recognized these attitudes but objected to their being considered as manifestations of mercy because hypocrites do not

deserve mercy[163]. This, in any case, is a matter of opinion.

The fourth category who benefited from the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, are the "People of the Book", i.e. the Jews and the Christians. Such mercy can be indicated in the following manifestations:

The first manifestation: is that the Prophet, pbuh, has endowed them with a privilege that he denied to the Arabs – his folks and tribe – when he accepted their sticking to their faith, but did not accept that from the Arabs, when he gave them the choice of embracing Islam or war.

This is indicated in giving the Jews and the Christians the choice between embracing Islam or payment of tribute, which is a sum to be paid in return for the protection given to them by the Muslims.

I would like, now, to move from the age of the Prophet, pbuh, to the Seventh Century of Hegira, when Holagu entered Baghdad and captured a number of Muslims, Jews and Christians. The Sheikh of Islam, Ahamd bin Taimiyyah went to him requesting that the prisoners be freed. Holagu offerd to release the Muslims and keep the Jews and Christians, for he had nothing to do with them. But Ibn Taimiyyah rejected his offer and said that they should be released before

[163] Muhammad Rashid Ridha, *Tafseer al-Manar,* v. 10, p.519 ff.,

the Muslims, because they were under their protection. Holagu admired his attitude and released all of them.[164]

The second manifestation: The Prophet, pbuh, exercised justice towards all those who lived under his protection. This was what God has ordered him to do: "*If they come to thee for judgment, thou mayst either judge between them or leave them alone; for if thou leave them alone, they cannot harm thee in any way. But if thou dost judge, judge between them with equity. Verily, God loves those who act equitably.*" (Al-Ma'idah, 5)

The third manifestation: The Prophet, pbuh, was keen on giving a good treatment to the "People of the Book", and sought to close the doors that lead to their being exposed to any harm. I have read an episode to the effect that at the time of the Prophet, pbuh, there was a small Christian community living in a quarter by the name of *Suq al-Nabt* .[165]

I cannot remember any case of any Christian being killed during the life time of Muhammad, pbuh, while, regrettably, the Catholics under Karlos V killed in

[164] See Ibn Taimiyyah, *Compendium of Fatwas*, v.28, p.617 ff.
[165] Imadduddine Khalil, *A Study of the Biography*((of the Prophet) , sixth impression, 1982, Al-Risalah Foundation, Dar Al-Nafaes, Beirut.

1521 more than half a million Christian Protestants, and burnt 230 thousand Protestants, as well.[166]

Dear audience, the Prophet's meeting with the delegation of Najran Christians reflects his good treatment of Christians of his time . Najran was a neighborhood close to Mecca. Its inhabitants were Christians who came to Medina and were well received by the Prophet, pbuh. He expounded to them the truth of Islam and left them to make their own choice, which they did. They chose to stick to their faith, and he left them alone. Then they asked him to send one of his companions to help them in the administration of their affairs and solve their problems. He said he would send them a trustworthy man, Abu Obaidah bin Al-Jarrah, whom he called "The Trustee of this nation".[167]

In another episode, the Prophet pardoned the Jewish woman who had put poison in the food she offered to him. He also forgave Labid, the Jew who had tried to harm him. He told his wife, Aisha, that he had pardoned him because he did not want to provoke people, out of mercy for all of them.

The fourth manifestation: Among the objectives of the Quran, which the Prophet, pbuh, sought to realize, was the integration of the People of the Book in the

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[166] Dr. Khaled Al-Qassem, *Dialogue with the People of the Book*, p. 90, first impression, 1414, Dar Al-Muslim, Riyadh.
[167] For the details of this story, see Ibn Al-Qayyem, in *Zad Al-Miád,* v.3, p.643.

community, through permitting Muslims to marry their women, mix with them socially, and eat their food.

The Prophet, pbuh, used to accept their invitation to eat, to visit the sick among them, and to offer his condolences in their afflictions. The Holy Quran has sympathized with the Najran Christians whose king had burnt them on account of their faith, and God menaced him with torture.

The fifth manifestation: The Prophet, pbuh, has demonstrated to the People of the Book the distortion and changes that had occurred in their religion. Such a step was painful to them, though it was a bitter frankness and among the manifestations of mercy. The proverb says, "Your friend is the one who frankly tells you the truth (about yourself) and not the one who (merely) believes you." Having done that, he left them to make their free choice.

The sixth manifestation: The Prophet, pbuh, has secured the possessions of the Jews and the Christians, their lives, their places of worship and even their food and drinks. He left them completely free in respect of what they eat and drink, provided this did not hurt the feelings of Muslims in light of the well known rule: "Harm should not be inflicted nor should any harm be reciprocated."

These manifestations have been provided, without limitation, for they are much more than was mentioned. They are merely instances that clearly indicate the extent of the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, towards the followers of other religions.

It was a good coincidence, dear audience, that the divergent view of the nature of Jesus Christ had clearly surfaced during the time of the Byzantine Hercules, who was a contemporary of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, (575-642). The Byzantines used to say that Christ had two natures, a divine one and a human one, while his subjects in Egypt and Syria believed that the Word was incarnated and became flesh and blood and that god became Christ. These were the Jacobeans.[168]

The differing parties did not know that at the time they held such widely different views, there was Muhammad, pbuh, who had the full truth.

It should be pointed out, dear audience, that the manifestations of mercy emanating from the Prophet, pbuh, towards those adversaries, has come to be a way of dealing with the People of the Book by the Muslim rulers who succeeded him, as I have pointed out that Muslims are bound to follow the Prophet, pbuh, in all his sayings and deeds.

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[168] See Jamil Baiham, *The Philosophy of Muhammad*, p.47, with some adaptation.

I have gone through the pages of history and found that the Muslim's treatment of Christians did not depart from the way drawn for them by the Prophet, pbuh, and I can regrettably say that the history of the Prophet, pbuh, with the Quraish unbelievers has repeated itself, as the history of Muslims with Christians is similar thereto.

The Muslims have treated Christians with forgiveness, mercy and tolerance, while the Christians have treated Muslims with utter cruelty in many cases in Spain, the Inquisition Courts and the Crusades.

I apologize for this digression, but this is the information I have come across to and wished to share with you. I hope that you follow up on them in their sources.

Let me remind you of what we have said in the first lecture in respect of the wretchedness of humanity before the advent of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, in all aspects of life. These conditions have been recognized by all who have written thereon. Hence, the advent of Muhammad, pbuh, was a mercy to all humanity.

All those who have studied the aforementioned conditions have conceded that there were cruelty and wrong doing therein, and all who have studied the life of the Prophet, pbuh, have admitted the existence of the manifestations of mercy in all aspects thereof.

This view will help us in understanding God's statement, "*We have not sent thee but as an evidence of Our mercy towards all the worlds*" (Al-Ambiyaa' - 107)

It was necessary that the system of mercy be complete and include all creatures, for it is inconceivable that people should be merciful towards one another, and practice forms of cruelty and torture towards other creatures, be they animals or birds. We have pointed out that morality is indivisible.

I would not be far from the truth if I say that the practice of mercy towards other than humans is a form of gradual education that implants this quality of mercy in the character of human beings. Thus, it is not easy for a person to simply divest himself of some qualities that preclude the exercise of mercy towards his brothers in humanity, such as selfishness, the desire of vengeance and hating those who harm him. It is as though mercy towards animals is a means and an end at the same time.

When the Prophet, pbuh, says to his companions, "He who does not show mercy will not be shown mercy[169]" and "Have mercy on those on earth and He Who is in Heaven will have mercy on you,"[170] his companions,

[169] Reported by Bukhari, the Section on *the Mercy towards People and Animals*, tradition 6013.
[170] Reported by Abu Dawood, in the Section on *Mercy*, tradition 4941.

who were Arabs, the well known masters of rhetoric, understood from such statements that what is required of them is the general and universal mercy if they were to benefit from the mercy of God, and not one that is confined to a certain category or particular genus of creatures.

Because the inhabitants of the earth that are referred to in the statements of the Prophet, pbuh, are those who are close and remote, friends and foes, young and old, males and females, animals and birds, none of them will receive God's mercy unless they practice it, out of conviction and love for all of them.

The Prophet, pbuh, has specifically enjoined against forms of sport in which animals are a part thereof and are subjected to injury. Thus bull-fighting is outlawed (*haram*), cock-fighting is *haram*, and taking animals and birds as targets to be shot at is *haram*.

This culture has been implanted in the minds of the companions of the Prophet, pbuh. Thus, Abdullah bin Omar passed by some people who were targeting a bird to which they aim there arrows, and said that God curses those who do such things and the Messenger of God, pbuh, has cursed those who take any living creature as a target.[171]

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[171] Reported by Muslim in the Section on *The Enjoining Against the Cruelty to Animals, tradition 1958.*

Dear audience, my admiration for this approach has increased when I read what psychologists have said that a person who sees pictures of animal torturing or the scenes of cruelly and killing will develop a cruel heart and a daring in his character that makes such scenes seem natural and ordinary, and will no longer be inclined to be merciful or tolerant towards others.

In brief, the Prophet, pbuh, does not wish to see on earth any picture of cruelty or torture, and does not wish to see any remainder of behavior, whatsoever, that is devoid of mercy, towards any creature whatsoever.

We can say, in contemporary terms, that the Prophet, pbuh, has sought to issue a legislation that provides for the elimination of every behavior that is contrary to mercy, in all its forms and manifestation and in all fields of life.

I agree, in this respect, with those who say that the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, was, at first, out of the ordinary for the conscience of humanity, in view of the remoteness of the reality of spiritual life from the actual facts of life. But ever since then, humanity has come closer and closer to the horizons of these principles, and their oddness have given way to normalcy in the conscience of humanity and has adopted and implemented them, albeit under different names,

All humanity has been affected, willy or nilly, consciously or unconsciously, by the morality of mercy which was preached by Muhammad, pbuh, and the shades of mercy are still operative for those who seek such shades.[172]

Dear audience, I detect some sort of boredom and distraction, and I believe that I am responsible for this academic approach. As some of you have stopped taking notes, I renew my promise to provide you with hard copies of these lectures.

I promise you something else after a short break, namely, to move on to another topic that is quite attractive to you. See you soon.

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[172] Sayed Qutub, *In the Shades of the Quran,* v.4, p.2401.

Ninth Lecture
Have Mercy on Vials

Dear audience,

I greet you and welcome you after the break which was badly needed. I hope my talk will be well appreciated and that it will not be followed by any reproach by the gentlemen in the hall, as today's lecture will deal with the manifestations of the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, towards women.

Smiling, She went on to say that some may ask why dedicate half of the lecture for this subject, which is a legitimate question, regardless of the intention of the person who poses the question, and I do not say, the woman who poses the question. At this juncture, the audience laughed and exchanged phrases which were not easy to understand.

Dr Adam paused for a little while, then said, "A few years ago, I wrote an article on the role of women in social change. At the time, I noticed that woman did not enjoy a high prestige with many great men and history makers.

I had remembered a well known saying, which we all remember, namely, that behind every great man, there

is a woman. I must admit that I looked behind a great many great men but did not see the woman in question.

I am not sure whether woman was behind those great men and whether they concealed her, by way of neglect, or whether she did not exist in the first place – Legitimate questions!

It was not a matter of neglect by those great men, but I found that it reached the point of scorn and neglect. It seemed to me that there is a culture that has directed some of these men throughout history, namely, that greatness and women are two contradictory poles. It is as though if someone wishes to be great, he must stay away from women and dissociate himself from them. He must show that they do not mean anything worthwhile thing, if only on the surface.

You will remember that Buddha began his journey to greatness – as he saw it – by abandoning his wife. The followers of Christ thought that that was the reason why he did not get married and built on this idea illusions that are tantamount to insult and scorn to women. Thus, Saint Bonaventure tells his disciples that when they see a woman they should not think that they saw a human being, but rather the devil himself.

It seems that this culture goes back to ancient times. Thus, Socrates says: “The man is in a pitiful condition.

He is at a loss whether to get married or to remain a bachelor, and in both cases he stands to lose.

On the other hand, Confucius, the famous Chinese philosopher, says that a woman must show absolute and unquestionable obedience to her husband, and that she must forget everything about herself in serving him, to the point of ceasing to exist and the man remains alone without any partner.

Napoleon says, “In France, they overestimate women. But they must not be considered as equal to men. They are in fact nothing but devices for the production of babies.”[173]

It was as though Aqqad had been aware of this regrettable fact, for he quoted the author of the book “The Short History of Women” the following sentence: “The age of chivalry was known as one in which young men had, in general, lost interest in the other sex”.

We may feel less surprised at this statement if we know that the meaning of chivalry had nothing to do with women, unlike what many would like to think, for in the age of chivalry interest in women was less than interest in horses.

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[173] Aqqad, *The Genius of Muhammad*, p.172

Then Aqqad reports a case in the Book on Songs and Greetings, which reports that one day the daughter of Osis was sitting beside her window when two young men, Garan and Jerbert, passed by. One said to the other, “Look, look, Jilbert, how beautiful this girl is.” But his companion said no more than “How beautiful is this horse, without turning his face”.

His companion said again, “I don’t believe I have ever seen a girl who is so beautiful. What beautiful black eyes!” They went on their way and Jelbert was saying all the way, “I do not believe there exists a horse that is comparable to this horse.”

Commenting on this event, Professor Aqqad says, “This is a simple episode, but it has a clear significance. Lack of interest will engender disdain.” Then he reported another event in which Queen Blanchefleur went to her husband, King Pepin, asking him to help the people of Lorraine. The King listened to her, then he was furiously angry and hit her strongly on her nose, upon which blood dropped from her face and she cried saying: “thank you. If this pleases you slap me once more whenever you wish.”[174]

Dear audience,

A consideration of these statements and news will almost create an impression that woman had no place

[174] Aqqad, *The Genius of Muhammad,* p.141.

in the life of great men. It is as though woman degrades greatness if she is associated with it.

I was struck by the fact that the manifestations of encroachment on the status of women were not confined to the whims of individuals, for they extended to official authorities that occupy a high position in society.

Thus the Macon Church Synod decided in the fifth Century A.D. to discuss the matter of whether a woman is merely a body without spirit, or whether she does have a spirit. Eventually, they decided that she has no spirit that has achieved salvation from the fire of hell, with the exception of Mary, the mother of Christ.[175]

The English House of Commons passed a resolution in the reign of Henry the Eighth, the king of England, prohibiting women from reading the New Testament and the Apostles of Jesus Christ, pbuh.[176]

I mention this, dear audience, and add to it that the only Authorized Version of the Holy Quran was kept by Lady Hafsah, the wife of the Prophet, pbuh, and the daughter of the Khalif Omar bin Al-Khattab.

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[175] Dr. Mustafa Al-Sibaaí, *Woman between Jurisdiction and the Law*, p.20.
[176] *Ibid*, p.211.

If this analysis is right, then it is quite a shame to see this attitude, and I do not hesitate to say that it is a disgrace to greatness. It is at least a misjudgment of motives and exhibits a failure to reach complementarity and balance. In such case, woman would be entitled to turn away from those great men and withdraw confidence from them.

Where does Prophet Muhammad, pboh, stand in respect of what has been said. Was he, like other great men, negligent of women in his life, and is it true that the principles laid down by Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, do not respect women but oppress them?

That introduction, these questions and the desire to ease matters after the academic presentation – all these have combined to make the discussion on women appropriate.

I hope that this attitude will appear, through my presentation of some events in which woman was involved. I do not wish, in this context, to talk about the sublime status conferred on women by Islam, specially if we compare this status with that of women in previous civilizations. These matters are now well known as evidenced by so many texts and confirmed by rules that have been being applied ever since the advent of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, and that have been acknowledged by the adversaries of the Prophet, pbuh, before his followers.

I have found, in going through the life of the Prophet, pbuh, that women have occupied an unparalleled prominent place in his life and interests, even in crucial situations. What has attracted my admiration is that woman herself has felt that she occupied a special position in the life of the Prophet, pbuh, more than that conferred on her by her nearest folks.

Dear audience,

A woman went to the Prophet, pbuh, complaining about her husband and the way he treats her. Another went to complain about her father, and a third about her brother, a fourth about her relative. These are events that show the trust women have put in the Prophet, pbuh, and their belief that he would listen to their problems and sympathize with them and have mercy on them.

Thus Jamila bint Salool, waited after the dawn prayer for the Prophet, pbuh, near his house.When he saw her, he asked her what was on her mind, and she said that she could not stand her husband, although she had nothing against his character and his religious devotion. She did not love him. He asked her why she did not love him. She said, “I was looking through the window and I saw him coming with four other men and found him, the shortest, the darkest, and the ugliest. So, I hated him”.

When he heard that, he said no more than asked her whether she would be willing to return the orchard he had given as her dower and she said she would. So he asked him to divorce her.[177]

What is strange about this episode is that the woman did not complain to her father or her brother. Probably she did not dare to tell them what she said to the Prophet, pbuh. Complaining to her fatter or brother would have embarrassed her and exposed her to reproach and reprimand, as this sort of behavior did not become a woman in the customs of her community.

Jamila had looked around her and found no one to tell him about her problem except the Prophet, pbuh. He was as she had expected. He did not rebuke her. He did not even ask her to change her mind about being separated from her husband Thabet. He merely referred to her husband's right to retrieve the dower he had given her by way of mercy towards him, for it is not fair that the husband should lose his wife as well as the dower he had given her.

The Prophet, pbuh, has had mercy on her and appreciated her feelings, but he also felt with the husband and told him about his wife's problem and

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[177] Reported by Bukhari and others. See Bukhari, the Section on *Women Divorcing their husbands*, tradition No.5273.

that he would like him to divorce her and take back his orchard. Thabet merely complied.

You will probably have noticed that the Prophet, pbuh, did not report to Thabet what his wife had told the Prophet, pbuh, about her husband, by way of mercy towards him in order not to hurt his feelings. I must also mention that Thabet was the official spokesman of the Prophet, pbuh, in public occasions, in the language of the period.

He was the Prophet's spokesman. Jamila, on the other hand, was the daughter of Abdullah bin Ubai bin Salool, who was one of the leaders of his people before the arrival of the Prophet, pbuh, and his staunchest adversary after his arrival. But the Prophet's mercy was above all considerations, in this respect.

He did not side with her husband Thabet, despite his close relation to the Prophet and his love for him. He did not take the opportunity to take revenge against her father Abdullah bin Salool, despite his enmity to the Prophet, pbuh. On that occasion he merely wanted to do justice to the woman.

Another woman, Khansaa bint Khudham came to the prophet to complain about her father, who had given her in marriage to someone she did not love without asking her opinion, upon which the Prophet annulled the marriage straight away.

In this behavior, the Prophet, pbuh, has confirmed that the age of enslavement of girls by their fathers or others was over for good. This is why he annulled the marriage by way of mercy to this girl, because he could imagine how her life would be with a husband she did not love.

In another case, Hind bint Otbah came to the Prophet, pbuh, complaining about the avarice of her husband Abu Sufyan, saying that he did not give her what was enough for her and her son. The Prophet, pbuh, said, "Take from his money what is enough for you and for your son, without his permission."[178] The mercy of the Prophet, pbuh, would not tolerate the situation of a woman living together with her son under a miserly husband who can afford to spend on them.

There is another woman, Um Kulthoom bint Oqbah, who ran away from her folks, because she was Muslim and her folks were unbelievers, who were harassing her. She had left Mecca and migrated to Medina, after the Prophet has signed the treaty with Quraish, which treaty provided, among other things, that the Prophet, pbuh, shall return to Mecca those who come from Quraish as Muslims.

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[178] See SaHiH Al-Bukhari, in the Section on *If a husband does not support his wife, the wife is permitted to take without his permission, tradition 5138.*

When Um Kulthoom came as a Muslim, the Prophet, pbuh, did not return her to Mecca, as provided under the verse of the Quran, which reads,"*and if you have ascertained that they are believers, do not send them back to the deniers of the truth* (Al-MumtaHanah, 10). Thus women were excluded from this stipulation, as it was applicable only to men, by way of mercy towards women and in appreciation of their special circumstances, despite the protestation of Quraish.[179]

As to Um Hani, the cousin of the Prophet, pbuh, and the sister of Ali bin Abu Taleb, she came to the Prophet to complain against her brother Ali[180], who took no account of her when he wanted to kill two of her husband's relatives who had sought her protection and entered her house, on the day of the entering of Mecca. She had closed the door of her house to prevent him from killing them.

She had come running to the Prophet, pbuh, saying in anger, "This son of my mother – she did not refer to him as her brother because she was angry – wants to kill those who have sought my protection." The Prophet, pbuh, said, "We give protection to whom you have given your protection." It was a kind gesture to the woman.

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[179] See Ibn Ashoor, *Al-TaHrir wa TTanwir*, v.28, p.155.
[180] See SaHih al-Bukhari, in the Section on *The Security of Women and their Neighbors*, tradition No. 3171.

Woman has received tender treatment from the Prophet, pbuh, which she had never had throughout her long history. In standing by the woman, the Prophet, pbuh, was destroying customs that went back to many centuries, and spared no effort to secure for woman her due position, using several means, because he had mercy on her on account of the condition she had come to suffer from..

His tender treatment began with his own family and he urged his companions to do likewise. Thus, among his statements is the following: "The best, the best, among you is the best to his family, and I am the best of you towards my own family." [181]His wife Aisha, has reported that he had never hit a woman in his whole life.[182]

This is a message of mercy that the Prophet, pbuh, sends to every husband, father, indeed to every man and to all human beings, to which I add another message of mercy and cooperation conveyed to us in an authentic piece of information, which I present to men in this hall in particular: "Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, was in his house a help to his family; but when it is prayer time, he would rise to pray."[183]

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[181] Reported by Tirmidhi, the Section on *The Virtues of the Spouses of the Prophet, pbuh, No.3895*, an authentic tradition in the *Series of Authentic Traditions*

[182] Reported by Tirmidhi, the Section on *The Character of the Prophet,* pbuh, tradition 348.

[183] Reportd by Bukhari, in the Section on *How men should behave at home*, tradition 6039

The Prophet, pbuh, was merciful towards his spouses; he used to help them in their house work, as he felt that the wife needs such help. Such attitude is not contrary to greatness or manhood, as some husbands think, and I hope that women would not stir any problems at home after hearing this piece of information.

The Prophet, pbuh, has urged men to be gentle with their wives and to play with them, so much so that he said that every thing that is not within the scope of the remembrance of God is amusement and fun, unless it is one of four things, of which he mentioned man's amusement with his wife.[184]

I should mention the noble instructions of the Prophet, pbuh, to the men, and he was the first to apply same, namely not to enter the house of his wife all of a sudden, after returning from a trip. Abdullah bin Omar has reported that the Prophet, pbuh, has said, "Do not knock at the door of women at night, and he used to send harbingers[185] to inform the wives that their husbands were back. Thus, he and his companions used to go to the Mosque to pray for a while and then they would go to the houses of their wives, who as soon as they heard that their husbands had returned, they would hurry to prepare themselves to receive

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[184] Reported by Nasa'i, *Book on Ten Woem*, the Section on *The Amusement of a Man with his Wife*, tradition 8890. It is an authentic tradition. See Al Albani, *The Series of Authentic Traditions*, v.

[185] An authentic tradition. See Al-Albani, *The Series of Authentic Traditions*, v.7, tradition 223.

them. This is an ultimate refinement of taste, mercy and kindness, and is a practice to be emulated in our times.

The Prophet, pbuh, used to practice such amusement himself. His wife, Aisha, tells us the following story. “On a trip in which I accompanied the Prophet, pbuh, at a time when I was still very young and thin, he told his companions to ago ahead of him and then proposed to me to race him, which I did and was ahead of him. But when I grew up and became fatter and forgot all about the racing, I accompanied him on another trip. He told his companions to go ahead of him and then proposed that I race him, which I did and he was ahead of me, upon which he laughed saying, ‘Tit for tat’.[186]

Dear audience,

It may be difficult to appreciate such behavior of the Prophet, pbuh, towards women, by those entertain in their minds certain ideas about greatness, such as the asceticism of Buddha and his abandoning of his wife, or such great men as those who have nothing but scorn and disregard for women, considering them mere devices for pleasure or machines for producing babies, and hence, men should not waste their time but should forget all about them, as we have previously seen.

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[186] Reported by Abu Dawood in the Section on *Racing with Men,* tradition 2578.

The Prophet, pbuh, regarded woman as half the world, when he considered women to be the counterparts of men.[187]

I was greatly impressed by the Prophet's description of women as vials that are fragile, a description that reflects his tenderness; hence, they must be treated kindly and tenderly. Such was his attitude towards his women.

Anas bin Malek reports that in one of the trips of the Prophet, pbuh, in which he was accompanied by a black boy called Anjasha, who was singing melodiously to the camels he was leading. So, the Messenger of God, pbuh, said, "Easy, O Anjasha, have mercy on the vials".[188]

Going through the commentaries on the above tradition I have come to the following conclusion:[189] The commentators have reported that Anjasha had a beautiful voice and was singing verses of poetry, some of which contained some flirtation. So the Prophet, pbuh, was afraid that the women might be tempted by what they heard and the effect of his singing; so he asked him to desist, by way of mercy towards the women.

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[187] Reported by Abu Dawood in the Section on *Men's Dreams*, tradition 236.
[188] Reported by Bukhari, tradition 6209.
[189] See Al-Nawawi's *commentary on SaHih Muslim*, v.1, p.6145

Another interpretation has it that when camels hear this sort of signing (which is called *hidaa'* in Arabic) they would move fast, which bothers those mounting them and might cause some of the women to fall off, and that was why the Prophet, pbuh, told Anjasha to desist. I believe both interpretations are acceptable. But whichever of them is the true interpretation, the episode clearly indicates the Prophet's mercy towards women and his fear for them.

In another episode, a woman by the name of Asmaa' bint Amees consulted the Prophet, pbuh, on a personal matter related to her having to choose between two men who proposed to her. The Prophet, pbuh, said, "Neither this nor that, because Ma'awiyay is penniless, and Abu Jahm was harsh on women, though he was well to do. I suggest that you marry Osamah bin Zaid[190]."

This episode is food for thinking and calls for admiration. Thus, this woman knew very well, as other women did, that the Prophet, pbuh, was extremely busy but despite that he would give them part of his time.

Another woman consults the Prophet, pbuh, on some matter springing from her feeling of mercy. So he gave

[190] Reported by Muslim, in the Seection on *A Three-time Divorcee is not Entitled to Alimony,* tradition 1480

her permission to practice what was on her mind in all security.

Dear audience, the woman is Zainab, the wife of the close companion of the Prophet, pbuh, Abdullah bin Masooud. She had intended to donate some of her possessions by way of charity, but at the same time she was aware that her husband and son needed such donation. So she was torn by her desire to perform a charitable action on some poor people for obtaining God's reward and meriting His pleasure, and a desire to give the money to her husband and son by way of mercy towards them.

So, she went to the Prophet, pbuh, to ask him about this kind of alms. The Prophet, read her massage, as they say, and told her that her alms would be doubly rewarded: the reward of kinship and the reward of alms.[191] So she was pleased with the Prophet's guidance, which reflects mercy among the members of the same family, and provided this woman with a good solution to the problem which was on her mind.

The Prophet, pbuh, was merciful towards Asmaa' and had pity on her, when he advised her not to marry Ma'awiya on account of his poverty, lest she should live a hard life, and had mercy on her, once more, when he advised her not to marry Abu Jahm , who,

[191] There is consensus on this tradition. It was reported by Bukhari in the Book on Zakat, tradition 1466 and by Muslim in the Book on Zakat. Tradition 2318.

though well to do, yet he was harsh on women. The Prophet, pbuh, did not want her to live with a husband with such qualities.

The Prophet, pbuh, also came to the rescue of some women who did not possess the right clothes for certain special occasions, such as festivals. So, he told Um Atiyyah[192], who had discussed the matter with him. “Let a believing woman giv her sister some of her clothes,” which is a merciful gesture emanating from a merciful heart, that was able to see through the woman and gave this wise guidance, which was a consolation to the woman and an end to her embarrassment . He has initiated a kind rule which women ought to be aware of.

When the Prophet, pbuh, captured Mecca, Ikrimah bin Abi Jahl , who was among the staunchest of his adversaries, ran away wandering aimlessly and headed for Yemen. But his wife, Um Hakim, who had embraced Islam, went to the Prophet, pbuh, and begged him to pardon Ikrimah, saying, “O, Messenger of God, Ikrimah has run away to Yemen, fearing that you might kill him. Please give him reassurance of security.” The Prophet felt mercy towards her and said without hesitation that her husband has been granted security.

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[192] Reported by Bukhari in the ection on *The Obligation to Pray with Clothes on*, tradition 351.

Um Hakim went after her husband and reached him as he was preparing to sail and told him: “O, my husband, I have been sent by the most merciful of people and the best of people; so do not expose yourself to risk.”

Ikrimah returned with his loyal wife and they both went to the Prophet, pbuh, who hastened to welcome him, feeling happy for his return. Ikrimah said, “O, Muhammad, this (woman) has told me that you have pardoned me,” to which the Prophet, pbuh, said, “It is true. You are safe.” So Ikrimah embraced Islam and became a good Muslim.[193]

The approach adopted by the Prophet, pbuh, was to expand the scope of mercy, so that his companions would apply it in their dealing with women, because he was aiming at propagating the culture of mercy on a large scale. This was reflected in cases when he asked some of his companions to stay behind and not to accompany him in travel or fighting, in order for them to look after their women by way of mercy to them, as they were in difficult positions of health or otherwise.

Thus the Prophet, pbuh, gave permission to, indeed he ordered some of his companions to stay behind on account of the conditions of their wives. Thus Othman stayed behind on account of the sickness of his wife[194], and permission was given to Abu Talha to stay besides

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[193] See Al-Salabi, *The Biography of the Prophet: Lessons and Examples,* pp. 616-617
[194] Reported by Kukhari, in the Section on *The Virtues of Othman,* tradition 3698.

his wife, who was about to give birth.[195] He also asked Abu Umamah to stay with his sick mother and not to accompany him on an expedition.[196]

The Prophet, pbuh, also returned those who emigrated from Mecca to Medina without the permission of their parents, particularly when he knew that the mother of one of those had wept because of her separation from her son[197]. In another case, a man came to announce his allegiance to the Prophet. He said, “They have cried when I left them.” Upon which, the Prophet, pbuh, told him to go back to them and make them laugh just as he had made them cry.[198]

The Prophet, pbuh, used to offer condolences to women who had lost a relative in fighting with the Prophet. He used to frequent the house of Um Salim. When asked why Um Salim in particular, he said, “I have mercy towards her. Her brother was killed when he was with me on an expedition.[199]

Dear Audience,

There remains one more matter in respect of the manifestations of the mercy of the Prophet, pbuh,

[195] *The Woman in the Age of the Prophet,* p.163.
[196] Al-Salabi, *The Biography of the Prophet,* v.2, p.62.
[197] Reported by Ibn Maja, in the Section on *A man, who is responsible for his parents and wishes to go to fight.,* tradition 2782*t*. The tradition is an authentic one. See *SAHIH Ibn Majah,* v.2, p.387.
[198] *Ibid, tradition 2782.*
[199] Reported by Musilim, the Section on *The Virtues of Um Salim, tradition 2455.*

towards women. I suppose it is on the minds of many of you, especially the women. I put it to you in the form of a question. How can we reconcile the Prophet’s merciful attitude towards women and his constant care for their feelings, with the fact that when he died he had nine spouses.

This matter is always raised directly whenever there is talk about the woman in Islam, or about the life of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh. This usually calls for censure, in my opinion.

Let me mention what looks like a balance in the judgments that are pronounced on things. I propose to put if before you as I have derived a benefit of which I became aware when reading a beautiful book of small size, namely the book on human patterns, written by the sociologist Raymond Firth of New Zealand.

In the book, the author says, “When I disembarked at a port in the south of the United States of America, I saw a placard reading: Waiting place for the whites only, and then I saw another placard not far from the first one, wherein was written Waiting place for the colored only, which situation people accepted without any embarrassment or disapproval. I personally was astonished and I disapproved because I come from a

country that has no such traditions and practices no such discrimination."[200]

Then, the author took us to India and said that when English soldiers were greatly astonished at the position of the cow in Indian society, as it wandered here and there in the markets and was treated with great veneration and respect, as such soldiers were used to see the cow in the fields and sheds where they were employed for tilling and milking.

When the King and Queen of England were crowned and the soldiers slaughtered cows, the Indians were outraged and clashes took place, the reason of which the English soldiers did not appreciate.[201]

The author of the book on human patterns has summed up the matter for us and saved us some time, when he drew our attention to the need to invoke the common social facts when evaluating a certain behavior.

Polygamy was common, and the Prophet, pbuh, did not depart from the norms of his society, where the number of wives a man can marry is not limited. Then Islam restricted the number to four only, and God allowed Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, to keep the older

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[200] See Raymond Firth, *Human Patterns* (an introduction to the science of sociological man, p.15, translated by Dr. Subhi Quddus, publications of Faryoush University, Benghazi, first impression, 1989.

[201] *Ibid*, p.14

practice for many logical and reasonable considerations.

I am here considering a matter to which sheer honesty and scientific research require us to give a truthful evaluation of the situation thereof. However, I personally like to be the only wife with no one to share my husband with me. Here I am speaking on my own behalf, and on behalf of all the women in the audience, upon which the audience laughed and exchanged a mixture of remarks that were incomprehensible.

I now propose to mention in this context some accurate information which I have come to know only a few weeks ago, and which some of you have never heard of.

The Prophet, pbuh, has confined himself to one wife until he was past fifty. This wife was Khadijah, who died at the age of 65.[202]

Then he married another woman, Sawda. When he married her, the Quraish unbelievers said, "How strange is what Muhammad has done: he married an old widow, who was not endowed with beauty.[203] She remained an only wife for three years, and those who were close to the Prophet said that he had married her

[202] See Dr. Ismatuddine Karkar, *The Woman during the Time of the Prophet*, first impression, 1993, Dar Al-Gharb Al-Islami, Beirut.
[203] See Bassam Muhammad Husami, *Women Round the Messenger*, first impression, 1993, Dar Dania, Beirut.

out of mercy for her because her husband had died, upon which she remained lonely with no one to support her.

In brief, the Prophet, pbuh, has reached the age of 53 and had not married more than one wife. Then out of necessity, of which mercy towards women and their folks was a part, he married that number of wives.

Mercy was operative in every story of the Prophet's marriage, and you can, dear audience, get more information on this matter, if you so desire.

I would like to say something in this context, and I do not wish to appear as a preacher: the men's mercy towards women and their respect for them, whether as wives, mothers, daughters, or sisters, is governed by certain considerations and dictated by certain convictions which we have clearly seen in the attitude of the Prophet, pbuh, towards women, and which I think are clear to all humanity.

Dr. Adam's Speech at the Concluding Ceremony

The cultural season has come to an end, and there remains the concluding ceremony, which is usually attended by the elite officials of the university, in addition to the audience.

It is customary for the lecturing professors to give an additional speech. Most of them wanted Dr. Adam to give this speech, for considerations, some of which are the fact that she was the only woman among them, and some others were the fact that her lectures had captured the interest of some media.

Dr. Adam began her speech by thanking all those she believed deserved to be thanked, and there were many of them. Then she said that she did not propose to give a summary of the lectures she had given to a distinguished elite, and she did not think the audience would have desired that she did that. There were nine lectures that included texts, statements, stories and figures. May be she did not want to do that in order for her lectures to remain appropriate for the objectives of the cultural season. However, the nature of the subject, and the keenness on clarification had imposed a certain kind of depth. This proposition has made the audience happy.

She proposed to put before the audience some impressions that she had formed and to express a feeling she had experienced after that remarkable trip in which she was accompanied by a distinguished audience, who had clearly contributed to the beautiful end of the lectures.

She said, "I felt sad when I found that history did not provide me with information on many great figures. Then I was plunged in an overwhelming happiness, when the same history has been so generous and provided me with adequate and enough information that included minute details on the life of the Prophet Muhammad, pbuh."

She went on to say, "It is my duty to draw the attention of all humanity to this great heritage, which Dr. Loil, the author of the book *The Story of Civilization*, said that it had reached ten thousand volumes. It does indeed belong to all humanity.

I do not claim that I have read anything worth mentioning of this voluminous heritage. I was merely happy to go through its beautiful gardens and plucked from its flowers enough to enable me to come up with a full conception of what I was aiming at.

The life story of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, belongs to all humanity. This humanity was present in every thing emanating from him, or a deed he performed. It is fair

to say that the life of Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, has transcended all time. It was not confined to a particular time in which it left its traces and was associated therewith, so that when time elapses it elapses with it. Neither was his life confined to a particular place and no other, or generated in a particular environment and not applicable to other environments.

The actual facts confirm that it represents human morality for all times, places and environments.

Scholars of ethics have maintained that ethics are motivated by several mundane considerations, none of which were present in the character of the Prophet, pbuh. There was but one motive and no other: it is the message of prophets that gave rise to love, which in turn gave rise to mercy, whose manifestations have encompassed all human beings and extended beyond them to all creatures. This is not surprising. His Lord has said, "*And We have not sent thee but as a mercy to all the worlds* (Al-Anbiyaa, 107)

His contemporaries saw in him a human being reflecting all human feelings and emotions. His greatness is reflected in his realistic and simple behavior and conduct. He used to weep spontaneously and was truthful in contexts that cause a noble person to weep. He held a child in his arms, kissing him in the presence of dignitaries, who expected to be engaged in serious business. In the midst of serious events, in the

ultimate preparation for fighting his enemy, he inspected the lines, from which two boys emerge, and he ordered them to go back home.

Then he ordered a man from his soldiers to leave and stay with his sick wife, and gave permission to another to stay by the side of his wife who was about to give birth, and asked a third to keep his sick mother company.

Dear audience, The manifestations of mercy have exhibited truthfulness, spontaneity, simplicity and realism. In every circumstance there is a message of mercy, to the leaders after him, to individuals, to wives and to mothers.

The Prophet, pbuh, lived at a time when Muslims were weak and few in number. Then he lived in Medina, where they had established a state and acquired great prestige. Their numbers had multiplied and their conditions had changed, but his statements did not change, nor did his deeds. He remained merciful, utterly merciful towards both who were close to him, and towards his enemies.

The people of Mecca had forced him to leave Mecca, after torturing and starving him. But when they themselves starved, he helped them. They had taken his possessions, but when their trade stumbled as a

result of their unfair stipulations under the Hudaibiyah Truce, he intervened and rescued them.

Is not humanity in a dire need for such practices, which clearly indicate that we can invoke mercy in all our circumstances and realize what we aim at. This was the case of the Prophet, pbuh.

Why is it that leaders and notables, indeed individuals, see mercy as incompatible with firmness, justice and controversy?

The Prophet, pbuh, has taught humanity that at a time when justice is due and must be done, he has shown in his words and deeds that mercy is also simultaneously due on equal footing and must be done.

I think that this equation has no place with many leaders and chiefs. Hence, things went wrong and the scope of problems has expanded, when the balance was missing and certain traits have dominated. But with the Prophet, pbuh, mercy came first, though he inflicted punishment on certain occasions and was severe for a while but without neglecting mercy, which caused some to consider it as the device of the weak that did not have an exclusive presence in the field, giving rise to its being misunderstood and misplaced.

Hence, he fought his enemy when he was forced to do so, but he was merciful in his fighting. Thus,

throughout twenty three years, the number of those who were killed from his own followers and from his enemies was approximately only one thousand. Such numbers are killed in minutes in today's wars.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have discovered things whose details I had not been aware of, before these lectures, including those that are directly connected with what we called the misunderstanding of the Prophet, pbuh, by people of a different culture, most of whom live in the West.

I find that it is my pure scientific duty to contribute to the elimination of this misunderstanding, if possible, through the presentation of the true information and the elimination of what seems to be illusory barriers or prejudices. I believe this is a worthwhile endeavor that will serve humanity, beyond the limits of time and space. The Bible says "Seek and ye shall find."

I have discovered, dear audience, that no human being, past and present, has any problem with Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, and neither has he with any. He loves human beings as such. He spent all his life spreading a morality that all people appreciate.

He loved life in all its manifestations and meanings. He practiced mercy in all its manifestations. He

respected the wishes of individuals, young and old, and people love those who possess such traits.

Let me only mention that the Prophet, pbuh, has respected the wish of Jamilah bint Abu Salool, when she asked him to ask her husband Thabet bin Qais to divorce her when she discovered that he was not the husband that suits her on account of his looks and shortness. The Prophet, pbuh, responded immediately and asked her husband Thabet to divorce her, which Thabet did. The Prophet, pbuh, did that despite his intimate relationship with Thabet.

I confirm, without any hesitation, and I am absolutely certain, though I am not so usually in my lectures, that Muhammad, pbuh, loves all humanity and that each individual reciprocates this love, even his enemies. What he hated in them was their sins; he did not hate them as human beings and God's creatures.

The funeral of a Jew passed by him once when he was sitting with his companions, and he stood up as a sign of respect for the funeral. His companions expressed surprise and said that it was the funeral of a Jew, and he said, "Isn't he a human soul?"[204]

This is absolute humanity, mercy in all its dimensions. The man was dead and on his way to the hereafter. As

[204] Reported by Boukhari, in the Section on *He Stood up for the funeral of a Jew*, tradition 1312.

such, respect for his humanity and mercy for him are due.

I realize that some leaders, thinkers and representatives of religion have a negative attitude towards the Prophet, pbuh, each for his own reasons and perspectives.

I am not interested in giving details of this matter; neither did I deal with this matter in detail in my lectures. I merely mentioned it in passing, in compliance with the wish of the dear audience.

The problem of such people, to whom I referred above, with the Prophet, pbuh, resides in that he advocates the openness of peoples and nations towards one another, so that they become one nation. But some of them advocate differentiation and stress particularities.

May be some thinkers and representatives of religion consider their religion as the other aspect of their nations. But such attitude I have never felt or seen in the life of the Prophet, pbuh, as he has never even insinuated that the Arab race was superior to any other race.

The Prophet, pbuh, has never ascribed the religion he preached to himself. Thus, we cannot describe Islam as Muhammadism.

The German Hegel has referred to this matter, when he talked about Islam in his illustrious book *Studies in the Philosophy of History*, when he said that Islam has broken all particularity.

I would like to point out in this context that the particularity that Islam has destroyed is that which engenders negative notions such as the superiority of sexes, land and races. As to other particularities, the Prophet, pbuh, has ordered that they be fully respected, such as language, clothing and customs that do not engender disputes among the various members of humanity.

It may be said that part of this negative attitude towards the Prophet, pbuh, is that we have here two orientations: the first is a call for humanity and mutual mercy, and another that calls for diversion, chauvinism and arrogance on account of race and potentials.

The Prophet, pbuh, was not satisfied to practice mercy in his words and deeds, but he bound all his followers to them and he would not tolerate the neglect of mercy in words and deeds from any of them, regardless of the reasons.

The effect of the orientation of the Prophet, pbuh, as the Quran required him to encourage Muslims to follow their Prophet: "*Say, if you love God, follow me and God will love you and forgive your sins*"(Al-

Imran, 31), and through warning them: "*So let those who would go against His bidding beware lest a bitter trial befall them or grievous suffering*"(Al-Noor, 63).

This obligation of the Prophet, pbuh, has contributed to the spreading of the culture of mercy among people, and began to be transformed into a collective trait and common practice after it had been a personal matter. People gradually began to accept that mercy has a place in their interactions and in their wars, whether they were Muslims or non-Muslims.

Dear audience,

When a fairly-minded person goes through the pages of history, he finds pictures of mercy that are apparent in the life of Muslims, in all matters of their lives. And if he finds situations in which mercy is hidden behind violence and cruelty and overstepping the limits laid down by The Prophet, pbuh, this is due to ignorance or deliberate ignorance by a besieged group that represent only themselves.

Humanity has unfortunately suffered from what Dr. Noam Chomsky termed violence and counter-violence and paid a dear price. The result was more and more violence, killing, and loss of security.

This equation- I mean terrorism and counter-terrorism- had no existence in the life of the Prophet, pbuh. From

the very first day of his preaching he avoided reciprocity, and strongly rejected the countering of terrorism with terrorism.

Ever since he began his preaching, his enemies killed women and old men from his followers. But he never did any such thing. They drove him out of his country, but when he was firmly established he never drove out any of them. They imposed on him and on his followers the policy of starvation for 3 years, but he sought more than once to lift starvation on them when it was imposed on them by the leader of Yamamah country. The Quraish unbelievers have besieged him, but he asked Abu Baseer to lift the siege on them.

The Prophet, pbuh, rejected the policy of counter-terrorism when he was in the apogee of his strength, and taught his followers the meaning of sticking to their principles and warned against changing them with the change of circumstances. This reminds me of the statement made by the English orientalist, Bodley, to whom I referred in the first or second lecture ("The circumstances of the prophet Mohammed have changed but his attitudes and principles have not").

In this behavior, the Prophet, pbuh, provides an example to humanity, in which he emphasized that there is strength in mercy and an effective effect that may dispense with the use of violence and cruelty in solving disputes and achieving objectives.

It is an invitation by the Prophet to humanity, whom he loved for their practicing of mercy, particularly the strong among them, so that they may feel happy when they show mercy to the weak, who will also feel happy, when they taste the sweetness of mercy.

Allow me, dear audience, to say that in the practice of the Prophet, pbuh, and his success in realizing great accomplishments through it, he exposed many who make use of their strength to influence those who ignore the policy of mercy, thinking that it is associated with the weak and that it does not contribute to the realization of objectives.

Humanity had been unlucky before the advent of Prophet Mohammed, pbuh. It either had a leader who knew nothing but force and killing, such as Alexander the Great, when he was under the illusion that he would make humanity happy with this principle, but failed and hid behind the oblivion of time; or a saint who knew nothing but the practicing of virtue in himself and those around him, such as Buddha, who had a limited effect and was a failure.

Then Prophet Mohammed, pbuh, came with both mercy and force. He called for mutual mercy and practiced it, protecting it with the force that was also governed by mercy. The result was balanced

complementarity, for the first time in the history of humanity, with which it became happy and successful.

Dear audience, if the understanding of the present requires invoking the past, the understanding of the past requires knowledge of the present in many occasions.

I was under the impression that humanity had, throughout its history two persons named Mohammed. One of them is he about whom hundreds of credible sources have talked for hundreds of years, representing him as a merciful man, who weeps at the grave of his mother when he was past 60 years of age, who held children and kissed them, who listened to the woman tenderly in order to realize her wish, who pardoned his enemies and had mercy on them, who prevented children from participating in wars and exposing themselves to danger, who felt pity for a bird and ordered that its chicks be returned to it, who cooperated in house work: cleaning, repairing, and preparation. He died with some of his property mortgaged with a Jew, in return for some barley for himself and for members of his family.

This is the Mohammed I knew and who is known to millions of people for hundreds of years. The other has existence except in the minds and imagination of some writers, who were his opponents and drew a picture of him that is totally different from the real facts based on

reversing facts and attitudes. In doing this, they hurt themselves and humanity to whom they belong.

I wish to tell the opponents of Mohammed, pbuh, that he was gentle with his bitter opponents, as is shown by his attitude towards Abdullah bin Obai bin Sallool who was the Prophet's first enemy. Whenever he did any harm to the Prophet and his people wanted the Prophet to punish him he would say to them, "We rather treat him gently, and keep him good company." And when the Prophet, pbuh, defeated his first enemy in Mecca, Abu Sifian bin Harb, he treated him as a guest and conferred on him some privileges before his people.

O, dear humanity. Search, as quickly as possible, for Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, because he has what most of your children lack. Search for him, so that they may learn from him how to love, how to treat their adversaries with mercy, how to fight with mercy, how to exchange views mercifully, how to respect others, how to be kind to women, and how to care for children.

Let us all search for him and learn from him, and we shall definitely find him in any sphere in which we wish to see him, and he will not deny us any thing because he loves all of us and feels mercy towards all of us.

Here, she was strongly moved and withdrew from the podium, followed by great applause.

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